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Prince dismisses entire architecture council to end feuding



BY ALAN HAMILTON, MARCUS BINNEY AND EMMA WILKINS
THE Prince of Wales yesterday dismissed the entire governing council of his Institute of Architecture.
The 14 council members, who include architects, engineers and public figures, were called to St James's Palace to be asked to resign. The Prince said the institute needed to take a new direction, and that it was time for the original council to go. Lord Morris of Castle Morris, the Labour peer who was the institute's chairman until yesterday, will remain as a member of the new steering group.
The institute, founded five years ago to promote the Prince's ideas, will be run for the time being by a committee of five drawn from the old council. Mass resignation by the board is the clearest possible signal that the institute's new director, the archaeologist Professor Richard Hodges from the University of East Anglia, wishes to put a firm end to the internal struggles and personality conflicts which have beset the institute over the past three years and which led to the previous director, Dr Richard John, being asked to move sideways only nine months after taking up the post.
Earlier this year the institute was refused academic approval and given two years to improve its academic standards. Without recognition from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architects' Registration Council of the United Kingdom, students who complete the two-year course will not be able to practise architecture in Europe.
According to reports, yesterday's meeting was entirely amicable, with the Prince praising the outgoing council for what they achieved, starting from no more than an idea, since the institute's foundation in 1992. He described the present moment in the body's fortunes as "the end of the beginning". The council agreed unanimously to stand down to make way for a smaller group, which will determine the institute's future direction. A new chairman will be announced this weekend, and a new full-sized council may be appointed at a future date.
A spokesman for the institute said last night that Professor Hodges wanted to make the institute more project-oriented. "It will be a policy of learning by doing. Students will be involved in practical projects ranging across every aspect of the built environment."
When the Prince began his architectural summer school, which evolved into the institute, it was seen as a champion of traditional values. But the passionate views of some staff and teachers, to whom modern architecture in all forms was anathema, combined with a belief that classicism was the only proper style, led to disputes not only with the rest of the profession but within the school itself. A visiting board of academics singled out history as one of the school's main weaknesses. Ironically, it was criticised on its foundation by the architectural establishment over fears that it would be too obsessed with classicism and history.
Students' work has been criticised by leading architects. In a letter to the *Architects' Journal*, Martin Richardson described their work as inept, crude and lifeless. "Their work is poorly drawn and desperately undistinguished, however decorated with the Prince of Wales' feathers," he wrote.
The three architect members of the council who have resigned are: Christopher Alexander, an American instrumental in setting up the school but who recently fell out with the Mary Rose Trust; Demetri Porphyrios, widely regarded as the best architect working in the classical tradition; and John Thompson, a champion of community architecture. The last two are expected to continue a close involvement with the institute.
Professor Hodges, the new director, was until recently the director of the British School in Rome, which colleagues say he rescued from a moribund state. Over the past three years he has been directing a major archaeological excavation at Butrint in Albania, which is said to be a new Pompeii, an undisturbed classical site of first-class importance.
Institute members, page 5

BBC excludes Blair in poll rigging row

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND ALEXANDRA FREAN

TONY BLAIR was disqualified by the BBC yesterday from the Radio 4 *Today* programme's personality of the year ballot after the discovery of a secret Labour Party attempt to rig the result.
The BBC closed written nominations for Mr Blair at midnight on Wednesday after the discovery of an "organised attempt" to distort the result in his favour.
The unprecedented action by the BBC, which was approved by Tony Blair, the BBC's head of news and current affairs, was a serious embarrassment to the party leadership.
A letter, sent to hundreds of Labour Party officials and trade unionists, asked members to find six people to write in and vote for Mr Blair to ensure he beat John Major in the prestigious competition.
The letter, from Jules Hurry, added: "Alternatively they can be faxed, though preferably not on fax machines which identify the sender as the Labour Party."
A BBC statement said: "We deeply deplore any attempt to interfere with what is intended to be a spontaneous opportunity for the programme's listeners to express their point of view."
The Tories swiftly exploited news of the ban on Mr Blair. John Major said last night: "This is very sad. It is sad for Mr Blair that his staff engaged in mass manipulation of public opinion in an attempt to get a phoney result." In a damage-limitation exercise



Why The Spice Girls have a taste for Tory politics..... Page 3

on radio and television. They also make them aware of how to obtain tickets to be part of television studio audience discussion programmes. They do not make public their party membership.
The unit is part of the network of Peter Mandelson, the head of Labour's campaign unit. Mr Mandelson, the MP for Hartlepool, is a close aide of Tony Blair. He is believed to be one of the "dark forces" around the Labour leader who were attacked by Clare Short earlier this year.
Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Party chairman, said last night: "The Labour Party has been caught red-handed trying to cheat. This is proof positive that new Labour will cheat in any circumstance and break any rule in their lust for power. Even with their rigging, Mr Blair did not qualify in the top six candidates."
Tony Blair, who was in Dublin for a meeting of European socialist parties, attempted to make light of the incident. "I know nothing about this at all, but I think things are better done in the proper way," he said. "It is not something I would sanction. As soon as we were aware it was being done it was stopped."
The attempt at vote-rigging was discovered yesterday morning after a copy of Mr Hurry's letter was faxed to the *Today* studios. Jon Barton, the editor, consulted with colleagues on the programme and decided to discount any votes received after midnight on Wednesday.
Previous winners are Terry Waite (1986), the Beirut hostage, Gordon Wilson, the Enniskillen bomb hero (1987), Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet President (1988 and 1989), and Michael Heseltine (1990).

the Labour Party leadership, disowned the fax from Ms Hurry, who joined the payroll earlier this year. Tom Sawyer, general secretary of the Labour Party, said: "The BBC are making a huge fuss about not very much."
"The truth is that an individual at party headquarters did this on their own initiative, and had we known it was being conducted, it would not have been sanctioned, and it wasn't."
However, there was little prospect of Ms Hurry being disciplined, according to party sources last night. She was absent from her desk throughout yesterday.
Mr Blair suffered a double embarrassment as the clumsy intervention from the Labour Party headquarters failed to achieve its objective and, for the second year running, he was unable to make the last six nominations. The letter of December 9 also said that it was vital to avoid a "repeat of last year when John Major won". He did not. It was a posthumous award to Philip Lawrence, the murdered headmaster.
The affair has shed light for the first time on the existence of the Audience Participation Unit which was set up earlier this year. Ms Hurry, part of a team of four, is paid to try to ensure that Labour Party activists take part in phone-ins



Paul Thomas: died in fume-filled car after saying to friends: "I can't cope"

Parents get drugs alert after pupil suicides

BY DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

TWO A-level students may have committed suicide after being drawn into the drugs underworld, the principal of their college warned parents yesterday. One boy had told classmates at Sir John Deane's College in Northwich, Cheshire, that he was in debt to a dealer.
Jack Tasker, head of the sixth-form college, which came fourth in the national A-level table this summer, feared their deaths were drugs-related, and he warned parents in a letter that pushers were targeting their teenage children.
James Pearson, 16, from Chester, apparently committed suicide by jumping off a multi-storey car park near Blackpool's Golden Mile last

month. James, a "brilliant student" with ten grade-A GCSEs, had confessed to classmates he owed money to drug dealers.
A second student who used drugs took his life at the weekend. Paul Thomas, 18, from Middlewich, died in a fume-filled car in Crewe on Saturday having left the 1,070-student college a month ago, telling friends: "I can't cope."



James Pearson: owed money for drugs

Both deaths are being investigated by police and inquests will be held in the new year.
Mr Tasker told parents: "It is likely that drugs are widely available in the local community and the main target group for drug dealers will be the 16-19 age group."
Sir John Deane's, praised by inspectors for its "well-deserved reputation for academic excellence," is a popular choice for students in the Northwest.
However, it has waged a long battle against drug pushers. Staff called in police three years ago in a raid that led to

Continued on page 2, col 7

Bonn refuses to back down in pre-summit row

BY CHARLES BREMNER AND PHILIP WEBSTER IN DUBLIN

GERMANY stood firm last night against heavy pressure from its European Union partners over the rules of monetary union as finance ministers struggled to stop the quarrel overshadowing today's European summit in Dublin and casting new doubts on the prospects for the single currency.
In a dispute that pits Bonn against Paris and goes to the heart of the monetary project, the finance ministers were locked in negotiation to try to bridge the gap between Bonn's demands for tough automatic penalties for high-spending members of the future currency and the wishes of the rest of Europe to leave room for political judgement.
While Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, and other leaders voiced some optimism about a settlement on the so-called stability pact, EU officials were preparing for a possible deadlock that would go to their bosses, the heads of government, to solve at the full summit. Rudolf Quirin, the Irish Finance Minister, said as

talks began in Dublin Castle last night that there was no sign of an imminent deal. "I have no prior indication that we can anticipate a breakthrough," he said.
Last night, John Major arrived in Dublin for the summit, his last before the general election, making plain that he would block attempts by the French and Germans to beef up the proposed new treaty on Europe's future.

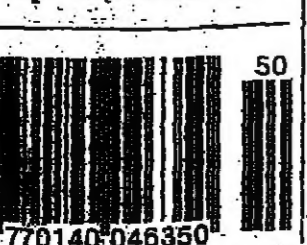
The Prime Minister let it be known that if necessary he would veto a move by the French to include in the draft drawn up by the Irish EU presidency proposals to extend majority voting to a wider range of areas including immigration, justice, home affairs and foreign policy.

President Chirac would be backed by Herr Kohl in such an enterprise, but it was clear Continued on page 2, col 1

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John Redwood and Hervé de Charette, page 18
Leading article and Letters, page 19

Millennium exhibition to go ahead
The Millennium Commission announced last night that the planned exhibition under a giant dome at Greenwich would take place. But the commission admitted that no deal had been reached on the funding of the project.
The commissioners, who include Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, issued the statement after a second day of emergency meetings. Page 5

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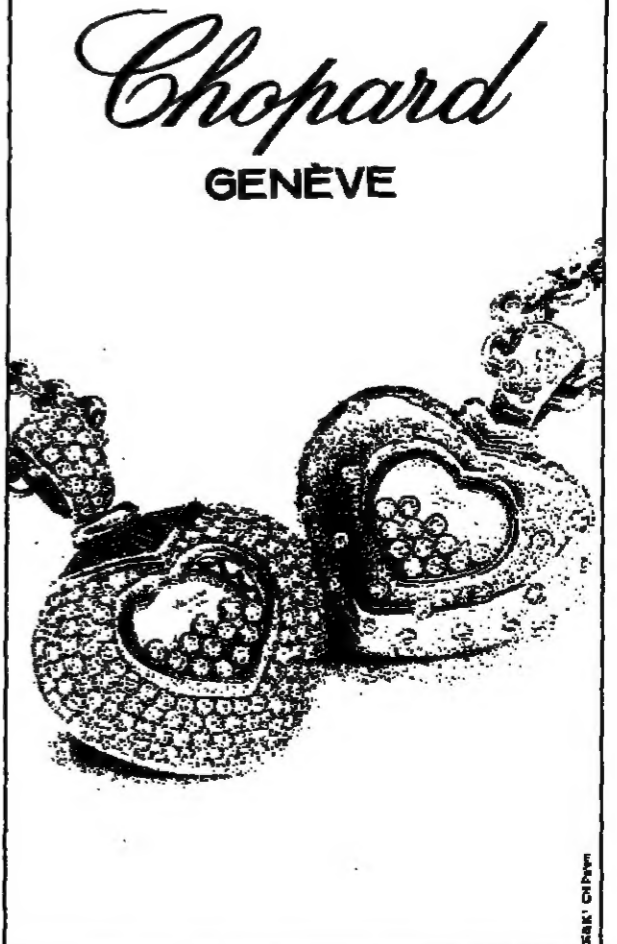
Britain faces return of floating jail

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

PRISON officials are planning to ship a former floating jail from the US and moor it in the Thames Estuary or Portland Harbour in Dorset to ease the accommodation crisis facing the service.
Two prison officials will this weekend visit the floating prison, *Resolution*, on the Hudson River near New York. Under the plan, it would hold 500 Category C offenders.
The "last resort" option is being considered because the Prison Service fears it will not get planning permission to convert a former RAF base at Farningley in south Yorkshire into a jail. Without more accommodation, the service faces being unable to accept new prisoners sometime between February and April.
The *Resolution* would be shipped aboard a huge barge and could accept its first inmates by February.
A Prison Service source said: "It appears to meet our requirements and would allow us to carry out a full range of activities. It has on it sporting facilities allowing prisoners to exercise and a full range of workshops."
The *Resolution*, formerly owned by the Bibby Line, provided dormitory accommodation for soldiers after the Falklands conflict but was converted into a prison ship in 1989. It was used by the New York City Department of Corrections to hold medium-security prisoners until 1994.
In addition to inspecting

the *Resolution*, the Prison Service is looking at other disused military bases.
Last week the prison population rose by 41 to a record 58,516 after a period when increases had been running at about 250 a week.
Stephen Shaw, director of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "It shows what a desperate state we are in that the Prison Service is considering the introduction of prison hulks."

History of the hulks, page 2



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House sees MP exercised by demon of the D-word

The forbidden exerts a fatal fascination. "Don't mention the war" was exactly what Basil Fawlty found himself unable to avoid doing when German guests arrived at Fawlty Towers. He was drawn like a moth to the flame.

Which of us has not experienced this? The subject we know to be taboo leaps from behind the bushes of our thoughts, hissing "mention me!" at precisely the worst moment. The ugly scar we know we must not stare at when we meet our niece

peeks over her lace blouse scowling "look at me!" until, drawn by some irresistible force, our eyes dive for her neck.

And the word we've been told is the one word to avoid over tea with the vicar insinuates itself into our mind, softly cooing "say me!" as we proffer the cake and lurch towards the sentence "do fuck in, Father". Somewhere in the unconscious mind, Nemesis calls, siren-like, from the rocks.

Yesterday Nemesis called Harry Greenway.

The elements of his small tragedy began as unrelated events. At about the time that Mr Greenway (C, Ealing N) was discovering, to his joy, that his question to the PM was first on the list for yesterday, the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee was agonising over a word to use in place of "lie" to describe the evidence of the former whip David Willetts. They decided on "dissemble".

On Wednesday night, at about the time that gleeful broadcasters were defining



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

(for that section of the public that supposed "dissemble" was the opposite of what you do with a model aeroplane kit) the exact meaning of the newly fashionable word. Mr Greenway was pondering what to ask Mr Major. He decided to ask about the need to protect the British veto in Europe.

Yesterday morning, at

about the time that Peter Mandelson was tugging the sleeves of Labour backbenchers with his wheeze for the day — "use the word 'dissemble' in your questions to the Prime Minister" — Mr Greenway was making a mental note: "Avoid the word 'dissemble' in my question to the Prime Minister."

In Tony Blair's absence,

John Prescott was to question Mr Major. At 3.15 in the afternoon, Prescott checked his script. The phrase was "Why carry on dissembling?" John Hutton (Lab, Barrow and Furness) rehearsed his own phrase: "Has dissembling become a way of life?" A score of Labour MPs reviewed their own plans to ask about dissembling.

Harry Greenway was rising to his feet. All he had to do was ask about the British veto without using the word "dissemble". Not difficult, surely? We are hardly looking at a

new-boy, Mr Greenway, who is 62, has been an MP for 17 years. An assiduous attender, this former headmaster's command of the English language is complete.

"Mr Harry Greenway!" Madam Speaker called.

"Will my Right Honourable Friend confirm," he asked, "that in the run-up to the Dublin summit he will not abandon the British veto?"

So far, so good. But something caused him to take a second bite...

"Will he assure the House

that he will never abandon or..."

He hesitated. He wanted a word for "dissemble" or "pick apart". Greenway's normally expressive features locked, as though momentarily gripped by some malevolent internal power. I thought I saw him quiver.

"...dissemble that veto?" Like an innocent possessed by dark forces, Mr Greenway looked dazed and surprised by the uproar which engulfed him. The demon of Fawlty Towers had struck again.

Help promised for lorry drivers

EU ministers end limits on damages for air crashes

By Staff Reporters

AIRLINES will be liable for unlimited damages for accidents in which passengers are killed or injured, under rules agreed in Brussels last night.

European Union transport ministers agreed to end the much-criticised system of fixed ceilings on payments set up under the 1929 Warsaw Convention.

The new agreement, which will apply to all European Union airlines, means that passengers or their families will be entitled to open-ended damages in accidents for which airlines are responsible and to payments of £30,000 for accidents even when the airline is not to blame; and that families of passengers who die in an air accident will be entitled to receive the first £40,000 within ten days.

The Warsaw Convention set a limit of about £10,000 on claims, although most countries have raised the level. In America the ceiling is £50,000, while many European airlines have opted for almost £100,000.

Last month, five European airlines, KLM, SAS, Swissair, Austrian Airlines and Finnair



Goschen: deplored blockades on Continent

agreed to abolish limits, joining Japanese airlines which ended them in 1992.

The agreement must now be passed by the European Parliament before coming back to European transport ministers for final approval.

The transport minister, Viscount Goschen, won commitments when he pressed fellow ministers for action to help British lorry drivers hit by blockades by striking drivers in France and Greece. He said that his French counterpart, Anne-Marie Idrac, had promised to deal with compensation

claims rapidly, while the Greek transport minister, Haris Kastanidis, had promised to do all in his power to help free British drivers who have been trapped for almost two weeks.

Lord Goschen told the French minister that some small British firms had suffered badly from the lorry drivers' strike and should be given special attention, with interim payments if necessary. "Central government must ensure that there are no delays and be ready to deal with the concerns of the United Kingdom," he said.

He added: "We deplore the blockades of key roads by farmers in Greece. It is unacceptable that innocent parties are suffering because of this national disagreement between farmers and the Greek Government."

"I have urged the Greek minister to do everything possible to secure the release of foreign vehicles that are still trapped in Greece. "We shall of course be supporting any claims submitted by British hauliers and have asked Greece what arrangements they will put in place for handling such claims," the minister said.



A scene from *Great Expectations*, the film of the Dickens novel that featured the evil of the hulks and transportation. Pip (John Mills) is visiting the fatally injured Magwitch (Finlay Currie), who had defied transportation

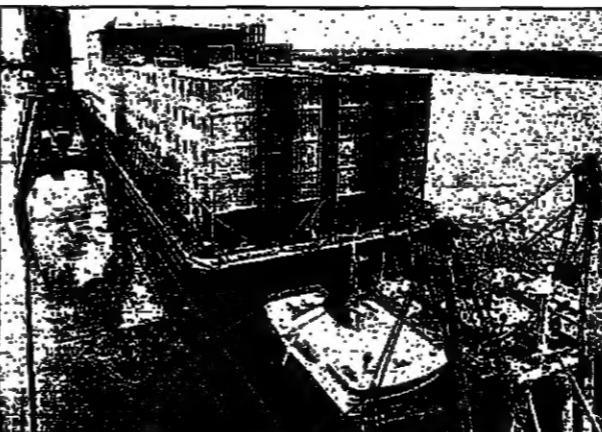
Shameful legacy of hulks that housed the peasantry and offended Dickens

By Tim Jones

THE prospect of a floating jail moored off the coast barks back to the days long before Charles Dickens smelt their stench and campaigned against them. Prison ships had always offended reformers who were appalled by the inhumanity they represented.

The "hulks" were introduced in great numbers in 1775 when the War of Independence meant that America could no longer be used as a dumping ground for thousands of destitute peasants and petty thieves. With not enough prisons in the land to accommodate them, old ships of the line were converted and their inmates forced to work dredging the Thames and other maritime rivers.

Hulks became a common sight during the Napoleonic wars. HMS *Bellerophon*, on which Napoleon surrendered after the battle of Waterloo, became a prison ship in the Medway until 1825. During the war, French



Resolution, the former American prison ship which may be pressed into service in Britain

prisoners held on hulks were marched 16 miles from Plymouth and forced to build themselves a better prison. Dartmoor.

If conditions in prisons such as Newgate were awful, life in the hulks was hellish. Men, women and children as young as seven were crammed inside them in

stinking holds which compared with the worst of the slave trade ships. They were leaky, like furnaces in summer, freezing in winter and a hothouse of riot and insubordination. The prisoners who festered beneath their decks were controlled by bored and sadistic officers. The hulks were also a magnet to every

form of disease and sickness, and death was rampant.

In spite of increasing calls by Dickens and others to abolish them, the last of the hulks were not abandoned until 1857. Since then, in less brutal form, prison ships have been used when shore jails have become overcrowded. One of them, the *Maidstone*, moored in Belfast Loch in the early 1970s to hold suspected IRA activists and is now part of republican folk lore. Seven prisoners on the ship embarrassed their guards by escaping and swimming ashore after noting how a seal managed to breach security nets that were supposed to be impenetrable.

Dickens mentioned the evil of the hulks and the misery endured on transportation ships in *Great Expectations*. He also raged against them in public speeches and letters. To him, the hulks were almost as wicked as public hangings, against which he campaigned in letters to *The Times*.

Ministers set up E. coli committee

A special Cabinet committee has been set up to respond to the outbreak of food poisoning that has claimed 11 lives in Scotland. Downing Street announced. The committee, chaired by Tony Newton, the Lord President, met last night. It aims to act speedily to implement policy changes after two inquiries into the E. coli outbreak in Lanarkshire. Other committee members include Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary and Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister.

Police powers

The High Court has reserved judgment in a test case to decide whether the police are legally entitled to ban peaceful demonstrations on the highway under the terms of the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, which brought in a new criminal offence of "trespassary assembly".

Pensioners' rise

Pensioners' average income has risen by 60 per cent in real terms since the Tories came to power, according to the Department of Social Security. The proportion of pensioners receiving income from occupational schemes also rose, from 43 per cent to 63 per cent, in the same period.

Duke's appeal

THE Duke of Edinburgh, who is president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, has written to more than 50 heads of government urging them to protect at least 10 per cent of their country's forests from logging and mining. Half of the world's woodlands have been cleared.

QE2 shipshape

The QE2 left Southampton for a three-day sea trial yesterday after competing a £12 million refit. Cunard said that there was "absolutely no danger" of a repeat of the 1994 fiasco when the ship sailed across the Atlantic with work still under way.

Terrorist trap

Terrorists tried to lure police and troops in Belfast to a mortar bomb containing 900 grammes of Semtex the RUC said. Officers uncovered the mortar in a bin as they responded to a hoax bomb warning at a church on Thursday night. Blair visit, page 7

Healthy rivers

More than a quarter of rivers and canals in England and Wales have become less polluted since 1991, the Environment Agency said. Studies of insects indicate that about a third of waterways are healthy and another third are in reasonable shape.

'Lifer' walks free

Thomas Campbell, serving life for the murder of six people in Glasgow's notorious "ice-cream wars" in 1984, walked free on his son's twelfth birthday yesterday after a 30-minute hearing in Edinburgh, pending a new appeal against his conviction.

Fiennes in Chile

Sir Ramulph Fiennes, 52, was in hospital in Chile yesterday after failing to become the first man to walk solo across Antarctica. He will undergo surgery for kidney stones. The explorer was airlifted from the icy wastes, 450 miles from the starting point of his trek.

300,000 at No 10

The Internet site for 10 Downing Street attracted 300,000 viewers on its opening day. Web visitors arrive at the familiar black doorway to the Prime Minister's official London residence and are then taken on a tour of the State Rooms.

Bonn refuses to back down

Continued from page 1 last night that the Prime Minister had decided to make the defence of the national veto the centrepiece of what could be his last summit battle if he hands over to Tony Blair after the election next year.

As the finance ministers' talks progressed last night, officials said that there seemed hope for a broad accord "in principle" on a stability pact. That would leave open some details for future negotiation, but would allow for a smoother summit today and tomorrow in which the leaders could claim that a further step had been taken along the road to

European economic and monetary union.

Failure to reach agreement would cast a shadow over today's summit, where, among other things, Europe is to be given its first sight of the new euro banknotes that are to replace national currencies.

A full-blown quarrel over what other states see as German bullying would also distract attention from the meeting's main aim: giving a shove to the new-model Maastricht treaty, which has been sketched out by Ireland and must be finished by the Dutch presidency in Amsterdam next June. Herr Kohl's and Presi-

dent Chirac's effort to present a common push for a frontier-free EU and more majority voting would ring hollow against the background of a continuing quarrel in Europe's core partnership.

The British star in Dublin yesterday for some EU leaders, however, was Mr Blair, who was given near royal treatment by left-wing leaders at their traditional pre-summit gathering.

Kohl feels fears, page 12
John Redwood and Hervé de Charette, page 18
Leading article and Letters, page 19

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'We are true Thatcherites. She was the first Spice Girl, the pioneer of girl power'

Pierced-nose pop group adds spice to Tories

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH
AND CAROL MIDDLELEY

THE Spice Girls, the provocative all-girl pop band, have pulled off their most daring stunt yet. Breaching with the traditions of the music world, the queens of the bare midriff and pierced nostril have announced they are backing the Conservative Party.

The pouting, all-female pop group chose to voice their views in an interview with *The Spectator*, the bible of the right-wing intellectual Establishment. Not for them sleepless nights over record sales and hotpants, they claim; the most worrying issue for the Spice Girls is, it seems, "the slide to a single currency".

And they have a genuine right-wing heroine to prove it. "We Spice Girls are true Thatcherites. Thatcher was the first Spice Girl, the pioneer of our ideology — Girl Power," said Titian-haired Geri, a 24-year-old with an uncompromising Eurosceptic outlook of which the Lady herself would be proud.

"We travel throughout Europe. All those countries look the same. Only England looks different. That is why the Spice Girls are profoundly suspicious of Europe." Victoria added portentously that the proposed European Monetary Union was a "terrible trick on the British people".

Baroness Thatcher's office said that she had not seen the piece but she would be "thrilled". At Conservative Central Office, however, where pop stars are rarely seen, there was less restrained excitement. "They obviously have very clear political views. They are a go-ahead group and we are a go-ahead party."

The band also spoke of a desire to be Number One in the soon-to-be-vacant Kensington and Chelsea seat. "I am considering whether to throw my spice into the ring and stand," said Geri. "If the people want me, I could not refuse. I'd be like Glenda Jackson, but better." With the band's single *Wanna Be* currently top of the charts in 28 countries and their new single *2 Become 1* a contender for the



Political harmony: Mel B, Victoria, Mel C, Emma and Geri are strongly against European Monetary Union and the surrender of British sovereignty

top Christmas slot here, popularity should not be a problem. The upper class vote should be cornered. Mel B, who sports a pierced tongue, told the magazine: "We shouldn't be prejudiced against any background, poor or aristo-

cratic. The middle class are the worst. We like the aristocrats," an ideology that may startle Joan O'Neill, mother of group member Mel C. Mrs O'Neill is an officer with Labour-run Knowsley Borough Council. However, John

Major should be wary of using the band as an election weapon. "The good thing about Major is that because he has not got a personality he's not hiding behind some smooth facade. He can't rely on his looks, can he?" said

Victoria. The Labour leader was more personally appealing but was roasted over policy. "We met Tony Blair and he seemed nice enough. His hair's all right, but we don't agree with his tax policies. He's just not a safe

pair of hands for the economy." And the pop stars are not sure about a man who has never done any proper work. "But the real problem with Blair is that he's never had a real job. In the olden days a

politician could be a coalminer who came to power with ideals. Not Blair. He's just a good marketing man," said Geri.

Neither did Sir Edward Heath escape. "If Ted Heath was the man in power who

Pop review of year, page 32

Year's probation for wife who killed Falklands hero

By A STAFF REPORTER

A WOMAN who stabbed to death her husband — a sergeant-major decorated during the Falklands War — was released to serve a year's probation after a court martial in Germany last night.

"He was calling me names and I saw a knife on the side so I stabbed him," Angela Fenty, from Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire, said in a recorded statement played to the court at Holme near Hannover.

Fenty, 24, said her mind "went blank" when her husband, his face only two inches away from hers in the kitchen of their married quarters in Holme, shouted abuse at her. Peter Fenty, 35, a warrant officer in the Royal Engineers, received an 8in stab wound in the stomach and died in the ambulance on the way to hospital.

Fenty pleaded guilty to manslaughter with diminished responsibility. She said she was suffering from premenstrual tension and was depressed because her husband was having an affair. She has already served one year in an army detention centre at Colchester.

Sergeant Major Fenty, also from Cleethorpes, joined the Army at 16. He had a distinguished service record, notably in the Falklands, where he

fought at the battle for Mount Tumbledown. He also served in the Gulf War.

The court was told that he was having an affair with a Danish woman called Barbara who lived above his local squash court in Germany. His wife said in the recorded interview: "He called me fat, frumpy and boring with no self-confidence. He told me he had more in common with Barbara because she was 44 with children and going through her second divorce."

She claimed that her husband, who had been married before and had two children, once threw her across a room by the scruff of her neck and slammed her head into a

coffee machine. On the night of the stabbing it was alleged that Fenty had had sex with a soldier whom she had known for about a month.

The Fentys married in 1991 when she was 19. Her parents did not approve and did not attend the wedding. A condition of Fenty's probation is that she returns to Britain to live with her parents in Cleethorpes.

Her mother Joyce, 56, said last night: "She can just come back home now and we will help her to pick up the pieces of her life."

The case came under the Army's jurisdiction because the killing took place in a military dwelling.



Peter Fenty and his wife Angela, who stabbed him

Leah friend 'confessed out of fear'

By MICHAEL HORSWELL

A SCHOOL friend of Leah Betts yesterday denied supplying the Ecstasy tablet that killed her and claimed that a confession had been made through fear of the bouncer at the nightclub where the drug was obtained.

Seven Packman told a jury at Norwich Crown Court that a threat had been relayed to him through friends that Bernie O'Mahoney, head doorman at Ravepal in Basildon, Essex, would break his legs and burn down his house if the 18-year-old student implicated him.

To pacify him, Mr Packman said he had arranged a meeting outside a petrol station three days after Miss Betts had slipped into a coma at her 18th birthday party in November last year. She had taken one of four tablets obtained through a chain of old schoolfriends.

The conversation, in which an alleged drugs dealer was named as the actual supplier, was secretly recorded, with Mr O'Mahoney's co-operation, by the *News of the World*, which handed the tape to police.

Mr Packman, 18, from Laindon, Essex, denies being involved in the supply of the class A drug to Miss Betts and her friend Sarah Cargill.

The trial continues today.

Church bids for execution papers

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Church of England is expected to be the leading bidder for a rare collection of church and state documents, including the warrant for the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, when they come up for auction on Monday.

The Church was last night still waiting to hear whether an application for funding to help it to acquire the £100,000 collection at Sotheby's had been successful. It is particularly keen to secure the 16th-century Fairhurst Papers, which will almost certainly be sold as a single lot.

They were last seen 30 years ago, when Sotheby's sold

them to a man who walked off the street and paid £230 for the warrant and between £30 and £40 each for six other documents.

As well as documents relating to Mary's execution, a turning point in British history that led to the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada, the papers include a letter dated 1589 from the Privy Council to the Archbishop of Canterbury, proposing that all comedies and tragedies should be censored by a committee before being performed in public.

They include a distressing memorandum describing

Mary's execution itself, at Fotheringay on February 8, 1587, which was possibly part of the Earl of Kent's documentation. The memo, in "secretary hand", describes how "... then laye she downe verry quietlye stretchinge out her bodye, & layinge her necke over the blocke, cryed, *In manus tuas domine*. One of her executioners held downe her hande, the other did with two strokes of an axe cut off her head, whiche fallinge of her attire appeared verry graye & near powdered [hair]."

The papers are part of a collection once owned by John Selden, a 17th century

lawyer and politician. Some of the documents were spirited away by Selden from Lambeth Palace, the London home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, when Archbishop William Laud was led to the Tower in 1641, to be executed in 1645.

Lambeth Palace library, the principal library for the history of the Church, wants the documents "in the interest of the national heritage". They would be available for widespread scrutiny for the first time and would add the final touches to the 66 volumes of Fairhurst Papers already in the library's possession.

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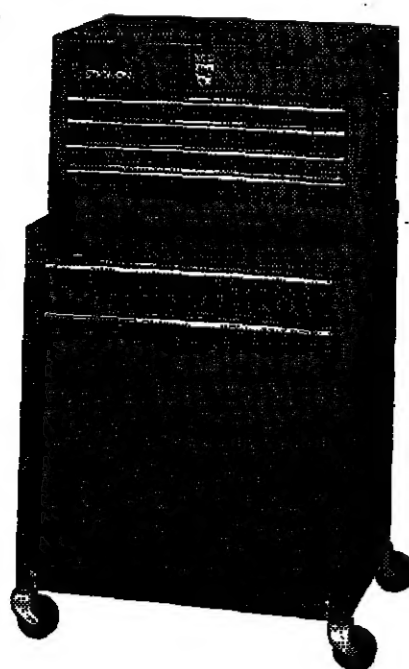
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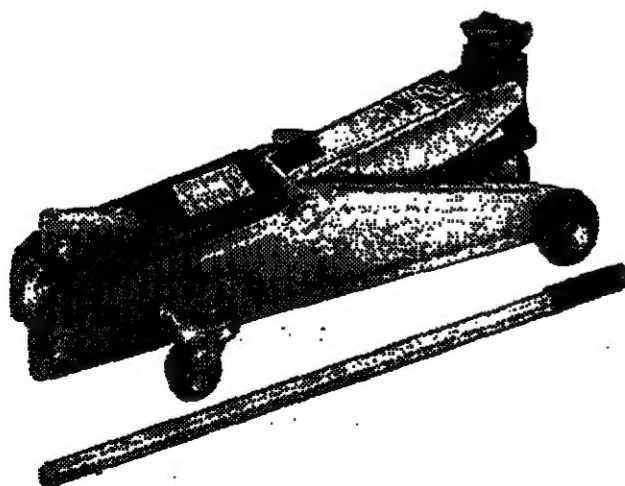


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Millennium Dome given go-ahead but no deal on funding

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE Millennium Commission announced last night that the Millennium Exhibition under a giant dome at Greenwich would take place. But the brief statement issued by the commission admitted that no deal had been reached on the funding of the project, leaving all those involved in the scheme in confusion.

The commissioners, who include Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, issued the statement after a second day of emergency meetings during which they considered the business plan for the £700 million project.

The commission is deciding whether to give £200 million of lottery money for the dome to be built. Commissioners were



Straw and Bottomley: letter of concern

impressed by the designs for the exhibition but concerned about the cost, which has been rising steadily.

Commission sources said the statement was made because of the letter of stories questioning the future of the project. But the terse statement said no deal had yet been agreed. "The commission is

now finalising the means by which the exhibition will be delivered within an acceptable budget," it said.

The sticking point has been over whether the government will guarantee borrowings. The Government wants to reassure private investors, who must provide £150 million of the total cost, by extending the life of the Millennium Commission and so have lottery cash available as a contingency fund. Labour has been anxious that no more public money be spent on the scheme, which is already costing £200 million more than initial estimates.

In a letter to Mrs Bottomley, Jack Straw, the Shadow Heritage Secretary, said he had grave concerns about the spiralling cost of the dome. However he provided a vital survival line for the project



Funding for the exhibition is still in doubt but in the meantime work on the Greenwich site continues

when he agreed that he could envisage a "time-limited" extension of the life of the commission, which is due to be wound up in 2000 and at present receives 20 per cent of lottery money. That is understood to be the key area of negotiation between the commission, the Government and

the Opposition. Meetings will be held over the next few days to reach an agreement. Millennium Central, the organisers of the exhibition, said officially last night that it was preparing for further discussions with the commission. Sources were bemused that an announcement had

been made without a deal being tied up. The news was welcomed by Len Duvall, leader of Greenwich Council. "We are delighted," he said. "There is clear need for decisive leadership to make sure the project is delivered in a way that can satisfy the country. The Millennium

Exhibition is a unique opportunity for the UK, we have to make the most of it and Greenwich will," he said. The dome, planned for a former gasworks site, will be big enough to hold two stadiums the size of Wembley and will house the Millennium Exhibition Centre.

Faces that did not fit Prince's design for architecture group

By EMMA WILKINS

THE governing council dismissed yesterday from the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture was drawn from the arts and the financial world as well as the architecture profession. The 14 members asked to relinquish their posts included personal friends of the Prince.

Lord Morris of Castle Morris was Principal of St David's University College, Lampeter, and edited

the New Arden Shakespeare series from 1974-1982. He is a former chairman of the Museums and Galleries Commission and a member of the Welsh Arts Council. He is an opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland in the Lords.

The writer Cauda Lyett Green is the daughter of Sir John Betjeman, the late Poet Laureate. She is a long-standing close friend of the Prince, sharing his interest in historic houses and churches.

Henry Boyd-Carpenter, a partner at Farrer and Co, has been private solicitor to the Queen since 1955 and was solicitor to the Duchy of Cornwall from 1976 to 1994. He has a keen interest in gardening.

Demetri Porphyrios is widely regarded as the best architect working in the Classical tradition. He designed the extension to Magdalen College, Oxford.

Professor Keith Critchlow, an expert on Islamic architecture, accompanied the Prince on his visit to Morocco in February. He is a former tutor and research director at the Architectural Association.

Dr Brian Hanson was a former director of the institute and remains on the teaching staff. He is a fan of John Ruskin, believing that there is as much merit in being a good bricklayer as in being an architect.

Professor John Barron is Master of St Peter's College, Oxford. He is an expert on archaeology and a former director of the Institute of Classical Studies.

John Thompson is a champion of one of the Prince's favourite themes, community architecture. Professor Christopher Alexander is an architectural theorist who helped to up the institute.

Sir Evelyn de Rothschild is the chairman of the family bank, NM Rothschild and Sons, and a well-known patron of the arts.

Stephen Lamport replaced Com-

mander Richard Aylard as the Prince's private secretary earlier this year. He was previously a diplomat. Dick Reid is a specialist stone mason and sculptor who has worked on Windsor Castle, Hampton Court and York Minster.

Michael Abrahams CBE, deputy chairman of the institute, is director of numerous companies including Prudential and Waddingtons. Alan Baxter is chief executive of an engineering company.

Archers addict scores a bullseye

By ALAN HAMILTON

A SELF-CONFESSED addict of *The Archers* paid £920 for a collection of memorabilia at auction yesterday. Peter Tewkesbury, 56, an electronics engineer from Horsham, West Sussex, has listened to all but two episodes since the serial began in January 1951. "I was a child in bed with chicken pox, homesick for the Midlands; its appeal was instant and it has stayed with me ever since," he said yesterday.

Mr Tewkesbury was one of only two serious bidders at Phillips in central London for the press cuttings, original scripts and photographs associated with the 45-year-old radio serial. The material had been owned by Tony Shryane, the retired BBC producer who supervised more than 7,000 editions of the programme.

As one of the programme's most devoted fans, Mr Tewkesbury takes his collection to conventions of other *Archers* addicts and gives lectures on what has long been a national institution.

The prize that eludes him is a copy of the *Country House Cookbook* written and published by Caroline Bone, the character who recently lost her husband Guy Pemberton.

Another anonymous buyer paid £575 for the original gramophone record of the serial's signature tune, *Barwick Green*.

Man and ancestor may have interbred

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

NEW evidence shows that *Homo erectus*, the strapping ancestor of modern man, was living in Java as recently as 27,000 years ago. The two species overlapped in time and may have interbred. Previously it was thought that *Homo erectus* died out at least 30,000 years earlier.

The evidence also means that three species — *Homo erectus*, *Homo sapiens*, and *Homo neanderthalis* — lived on Earth at the same time.

A team led by Dr Carl Swisher of the Berkeley Chronology Centre in California, reports in *Science* that new dating techniques applied to sites in Java where *Homo erectus* skulls have been found date their age at between 28,000 and 33,000 years.

The dates are open to question because they are not of the skulls themselves, but of teeth from water buffalo found in the same soil levels. The skulls contain no teeth and the university in Java that holds them has not allowed fragments of bone to be removed for dating.

The animal teeth are the next best thing and they were dated by electron spin resonance and uranium series dating. The results are consistent and Dr Chris Stringer of the Natural History Museum described them as "very interesting indeed". He said that while some might question the reliability of the dates, the animal teeth came from two separate sites and gave the same answer.



Branson launches second attempt at balloon record

By ANDREW PIERCE

RICHARD BRANSON flies to Morocco tonight to begin the final countdown to his attempt to circumnavigate the globe in a hot-air balloon in 18 days. The millionaire adventurer has dedicated the trip to the memory of the late Matthew Harding, the vice-chairman of Chelsea Football Club, who died of a heart attack in 1995. Mr Harding, a close friend of Mr Branson, visited the balloon factory in Oswestry, Shropshire, only hours before he was killed in a helicopter crash in October.

An attempt in January to launch the expedition was called off because of bad weather, but now the conditions are more favourable. The jetstream required to propel the 12.5 tonne balloon — 200ft high when inflated — and capsule on the first leg of its journey are there. The Virgin Challenger crew is on a 72-hour alert for take-off. They are aiming to secure a place in *The Guinness Book*

of Records by crossing more than 70 countries at an average altitude of 30,000 ft. The balloon should traverse Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and India, and head southeast from the Himalayas across Thailand, Vietnam and the Pacific before crossing the United States and arriving in Britain.

Steve Fossett, an American balloonist, is planning to leave Switzerland at the same time, planning to beat the British crew to the endurance record. Since January, the Virgin Challenger team has had a new balloon envelope constructed, weighing 2.1 tonnes. Light and sound equipment designed to induce sleep is being installed in the 10 ft wide capsule, home for 18 days for the three men.

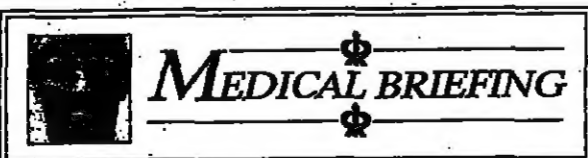
A communications centre at the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington, west London, will be in round-the-clock contact with Mr Branson. Before takeoff, Mr Branson, and his co-pilots, Per Lindstrand and Rory McCarthy, will take tea with the King of Morocco.

The habit which kills one woman every 12 minutes

ALTHOUGH more men than women are killed by diseases which can be related to smoking, it is the increase in the death rate in women which can be attributed to smoking that has excited most interest. The percentage of younger women who smoke has risen in the past year by 5 per cent.

According to statistics released by the Health Education Authority, 77,500 men and 42,500 women died in 1995 from a disease that was likely to have been induced by their smoking. The statisticians estimate that a woman dies every 12 minutes of a tobacco-related condition.

Cancer of the lung is not the only cancer, or even the only disease, which is closely associated with smoking. It is a crucial factor in the development of cancer of the mouth, the larynx and upper respiratory tract. These tumours kill 2,000 people each year. Cancer of the bladder accounts for about the same number and



Dr Thomas Stuttford

cancer of the oesophagus (gullet) causes nearly 5,000 fatalities annually. Smoking is also a factor in the development of cancer of the cervix, and is thought to be responsible for some cases of malignant disease in the kidney, stomach, and pancreas and myeloid leukaemia. Smoking is a significant risk factor in circulatory diseases as well as in chronic lung conditions, both of which account for a large proportion of deaths. Last year 293,193 British women died. Ischaemic heart disease, acute heart attacks and heart failure caused the death of approximately

118,400 women and another 37,500 died from strokes. Acute and chronic, but non-cancerous, lung disease killed 45,000. Cancer of the lung was fatal in 11,684 cases.

Breast cancer, cancer of the cervix and cancer of the lung affect women of all ages. However, diseases of the cardiovascular system are much more common and account for more deaths than all the other common causes put together. The increase in the death rate in women from coronary heart disease after the menopause is noticeable. A proportion of these must be related to smoking.

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Lawyer says victims of violence should sue film-makers

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

VICTIMS of violent "copycat" crimes should have the right to claim damages from the makers of films or television programmes, a barrister said yesterday. Claire Miskin, editor of the Entertainment Law Review, said that such actions were already being brought in the United States although she knew of none in Britain.

Ms Miskin said: "There is a rise in violence in society and a rise in copycat crimes. A number of film and television producers appear to have come to the view that violence makes money and extreme violence makes a lot of money, and that is all that matters. If the result is that innocent people get hurt or killed, it is nothing to do with them."

She admitted that it would be difficult to prove in court that a violent film had caused a crime but, in principle, such a legal remedy should exist. "It is difficult to see why an action for damages should not lie in appropriate cases."

The Law Commission said on Wednesday that drivers and others who caused injury should have to pay the hospital treatment costs for their victims. It said that, in cases where victims won damages, the National Health Service should be able to recoup an estimated £100 million a year from the insurers of those responsible.

In the United States, Sarah Edmondson, 19, and her former boyfriend, Benjamin Darras, 18, are awaiting trial for a shooting in Louisiana and the murder of Bill Savage in Mississippi. Both crimes were committed shortly after the couple had seen Oliver Stone's film *Natural Born Killers*, and were on their way from Oklahoma to Memphis. On their journey Darras is said to



John Grisham believed producers could be liable

have said how much he would like to kill people at random. John Grisham, the novelist, has argued that in some circumstances there should be a right of legal redress against film-makers. Oliver Stone has opposed any right of redress and has said that nobody can prove that his film caused the two young people to commit their crimes.

Lawyers had mixed views about the idea yesterday. Mark Stephens, of the City firm Stephens Innocent, said if such an action was brought it would be unlikely to get legal aid. But others thought it just a matter of time before such a case was brought.

There was mixed reaction also to the Law Commission proposals. Malcolm Henke, head of the motor claims unit at Davies Arnold Cooper, the City law firm which acts for several insurance companies, said the proposals were in line with the trend towards financing the NHS through the insurance industry. "At present this is restricted to hospital treatment, fees and

welfare benefits. But future governments are unlikely to be able to afford to draw a line at that point," he said.

Sharon Taylor, insurance manager of VELO, a leading fleet accident and insurance management company, said the proposals seemed logical at first glance. But there was a fear that the move would "create a dangerous precedent".

"Other legitimate accidents, such as those occurring in the home, could even become the next target for the NHS to recoup costs," she said. "Motorists are already heavily taxed. Are they now being asked to pay twice for NHS care — once via taxation and again through higher insurance premiums?"

David Pipkin, a legal executive and member of Davies Arnold Cooper's motor claims unit, warned that the proposals could have a heavy knock-on effect for motorists.

He said it was not clear how the NHS would calculate its services. If it charged on the same scales as it did for private medical treatment, the costs would be "very significant" and the rise in premiums substantial.

Law report, page 35



Tony Blair as a baby with his mother Hazel, who hailed from a family of farmers in Co Donegal

Ulster roots give hope of harmony for Blair visit

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND NICHOLAS WATT

TONY BLAIR will send a message of reassurance to Ulster Unionists during his visit to Northern Ireland today. In a speech he will underline his commitment to a more neutral stance on the Province, to replace the republican sympathies of past Labour leaderships.

Mr Blair is well placed to build bridges with Unionists because he has strong Protestant roots in Ulster. His mother, Hazel, was from Co Donegal and he spent childhood holidays in her home town of Ballyshannon.

Senior figures deny that there are plans to form an alliance with the Unionists to bring down the Government. Mr Blair will, however, meet David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, as part of his effort to build confidence among loyalists. He will also visit Newry and Armagh, the constituency of Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party.

Mr Blair's speech in Belfast is expected to reflect his belief that political parties should be encouraged to reach agreement about a settlement on Ireland's future which respects both Unionist and nationalist traditions. This is a significant shift from the previous policy to press for a united Ireland by consent.

Mr Blair's mother, who died in 1975, was born Hazel Corcoran in 1923, a year after Co Donegal became one of the three Ulster counties to be excluded from the newly created Northern Ireland. She moved to Glasgow after her father died but retained strong links with Ulster.

Mr Blair, who grew up in northeast England, said shortly after he became party leader that his mother hailed from a "not particularly" Tory family of Protestant farmers. George Johnston, whose husband Eddie is a second cousin of Mr Blair, recalled at the time: "Tony was very talkative. You knew that he would get on."

Mr Blair hit back yesterday at a Protestant leader who had criticised his marriage to a Roman Catholic. Robert Saulters, newly appointed master of the Orange Order in Northern Ireland, described him as a turncoat.

Mr Blair spoke out after a meeting with Mary Robinson, the President of the Republic, in Dublin yesterday. "I married my wife because I love her," he said. "These religious differences do not matter. What is important is how people are trying hard to work for peace."

Mr Blair also met John Bruton, the Prime Minister, and Bertie Ahern, leader of Fianna Fail.

Leading article, page 19



The Anguise ring

Signet sale rings up £20,000

By JOHN SHAW

A RENAISSANCE signet ring went to an anonymous bidder for £20,700, more than three times the estimate, at Christie's in London yesterday.

The gold ring, found in a field near Foulsham, Norfolk, by the anonymous owner, features the coat of arms of Thomas Anguise (1538-1617), a mayor of Norwich.

The ring's top swivels to reveal a skull on the reverse, thought to be a reference to the early deaths of some of Anguise's children. Researchers found a portrait of Anguise in Norwich, in which he was wearing the ring.

□ The Marquess of Bristol sold the lordship of the manor of Sleford for £1,250 at auction.

Aggression 'the norm' for children

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TEENAGERS feel surrounded by violence and believe the aggression they see on television and film is a reflection of life at school and on the streets, according to research.

Media coverage has made British nine to 16-year-olds think that extraordinary events such as child murders and paedophile cases are becoming the norm, while the presentation of violence has heightened their awareness of it, a survey published by the Broadcasting Standards Council shows.

Lady Howe, the council's chairwoman, said: "What has to be a worry to everyone is the extent to which violence seems to be so much a feature of everyday as well as media life for young people."

The council's survey showed, however, that teenagers looked first to their parents and older siblings as role models, rather than to violent screen heroes.

Although most young people realised they could be

influenced by the media, and nearly 60 per cent thought that aggression on television could encourage real-life violence, the survey revealed a high degree of media literacy. Young people could distinguish between fictional violence and that in factual programmes, such as the news. They were often more disturbed by violence in soap operas such as *EastEnders* than that in Hollywood films because it seemed more real to them.

Although the teenagers thought that ratings systems were needed to protect vulnerable people and children younger than themselves, most felt that the censors were out of touch with the values of young people.

The survey found that teenagers largely controlled their own viewing, lending weight to a plan by Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, to encourage more parental control over children's viewing habits.

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Turkey testers give frozen birds the cold shoulder

CAN you tell the difference between fresh and frozen turkey? Is buying fresh turkey worth it? Today, *The Times* is able to provide the answers to these crucial Christmas questions after a blind tasting with the help of the Good Housekeeping Institute.

We obtained from trade sources two supposedly identical Grade A frozen turkeys and a fresh one of similar weight, 7kg (16lb). Typical prices at present are £2.60 per kilogram frozen and £3.72 fresh. All supermarkets are stocking fresh birds.

They were cooked simultaneously at identical temperatures in three ovens by Claire Young of the institute. She lightly seasoned them, covered them with buttered foil and basted them regularly. They were cooked for 4½ hours and uncovered for the last 30 minutes to brown the skin.

Our tasters were Nico Ladenis, the Michelin three-star chef of Chez Nico at Ninety Park Lane; Lyn Hall, a cookery school director; Moyra Fraser, the head of the Good Housekeeping Institute; Fiona Hunter, the institute's nutritionist; Trish Davies, a

WEEKEND SHOPPING
Fresh beats frozen in the opinion of the Times panel, but Robin Young finds that only one thing makes turkey palatable for the experts: the trimmings

home economist and food stylist; Rebecca Hopkins of the British Turkey Federation; and *The Times*'s own most discriminating palate, the wine correspondent Jane MacQuitty.

The three turkeys were presented alongside each other and the tasters asked to identify the fresh one. They all did so almost immediately. Both frozen birds had shrunk from the bone, one rather horribly so, leaving the keel protruding disquietingly from its chest.

Ms Hall remarked that both frozen birds showed a weird, unsightly pink staining in the flesh closest under the skin. Ms Davies agreed that the freezing process and pointed out that both birds also showed blisters of white coagulated protein — "a horrible, soft,

non-meat substance" — under the skin at the bottom of the breast. It was textureless gunge created by permafrost destroying texture in the flesh.

Such complaints, though, were as nothing compared to reactions to the birds' smell and flavour. "Numbers one and three [the frozen birds] have been led on fish meal," said Mr Ladenis with distaste as soon as his knife cut into them. "They stink. Yeuch!" Quite independently, Ms MacQuitty, who tasted the turkeys separately, reeled in disgust. "They reek of fish oil. Appalling."

Our fresh bird had several advantages over those likely to be bought at supermarkets. It was a bronze (a black-feathered bird, traditionally supposed to have more flavour); it was free range, which clearly showed in the markedly dark-

er meat of its well-developed legs; and it was farm-fresh, not having been gas-flushed (inert packed) and kept in chilled storage for up to six weeks, as is the case with some supermarket fresh birds.

The fresh bird carved and looked better but, although it was everyone's favourite, nobody thought much of the flavour. Ms Hall's nose of "good, clear flavour of turkey from firm fine-grained meat" was the highest praise. "Gamey smell but the best flavour," Ms Davies thought. "Slightly fishy," Ms Fraser said, "and bland." Ms Hunter noted: "Still not much flavour," while Ms MacQuitty wrote: "Better textured, but bland all the same."

So should anyone buy frozen turkey? Last year, at promotional prices as low as 29p a pound, it was substantially cheaper than pet food and may be so again this year. No matter, said our panel. "I would never serve anyone frozen turkey," Ms MacQuitty declared.

"Stringy breast and muddy flavoured leg meat, off-putting and repulsive. Anyone who can taste at all is going to be



Nico Ladenis carves, watched by fellow members of the tasting panel, Lyn Hall, left, and Trish Davies

offended and upset by it. If this is the national diet at Christmas no wonder people look forward to the New Year."

"Unpleasant, unpalatable," Ms Fraser wrote. "Like eating cardboard." Ms Hunter thought: "The taste is not good, and the flesh is very dry and stringy," Ms Davies said: "Inedible," was Ms Hall's

succinct opinion. "Fishy, dry, and simply ghastly," Mr Ladenis said.

But is fresh turkey worth the premium? The tasters were doubtful. "We usually have a small turkey at home stuffed with truffles and as many good things as I can lay hands on," Mr Ladenis said. "This year I will tell my wife not to

bother. I have had enough turkey for one year." "I'm getting goose," Ms MacQuitty said. Only Ms Hall and Ms Hopkins could muster enthusiasm for the thought of a turkey sandwich on Boxing Day.

They agreed that turkey worked only because of the stuffing, foremost, cranberry

sauce, chipolatas, gravy and other trimmings. "The flavour depends on how the bird is cooked," said Ms Hopkins in her role as the turkeys' champion. "It is better to stuff, add herbs and other flavourings." As many as possible, our panel agreed, although with frozen birds there could never be enough.

Little things that mean so much to Christmas cooks

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE range of Christmas food products has never been more varied or tempting. Supermarkets, ever anxious to take on a bigger load of the family catering, have excelled themselves this year. New ranges of party foods include canapés and ethnic specialities such as sushi, dim sum, meze and antipasti.

Particularly commendable initiatives:

Iceland: liqueur-laced gateaux, including Irish Cream wrapped in chocolate and cream, £3.99 to serve eight, children's ice-cream trees, reindeer and snowmen, £1.49 to serve four.

Marks & Spencer: biggest and best range of party food; vegetarian chestnut roast with stuffing and cranberry sauce, £3.49, Connoisseur range of caramelised nuts, pricey but nice — macadamias £6.99 for 200g, almonds and cashews £4.99 for 200g, and pecans £4.99 for 175g.

Safeway: apples with Happy Christmas greeting "grown" into the skin, 39p, storage jar filled with nuts and nutcrackers £6.99.

Morrisons: oysters 39p each, fresh mussels 45p a lb, Stella Artois £8.99 for 440ml x 24.

Tesco: mandarins with Coin-trau £3.99, spiced cranberry

chutney £2.99, Christmas berry vinegar in 1.5ltr reusable jar £19.99, range of cheese gifts from £1.99 to £19.99.

Waitrose: Marston's Pedigree ale, £2.23 for two 568ml bottles, 12 savoury bites £1.19, 12 mini Melfon Mowbray pork pies £2.59, shortcrust mince pies 75p for six.

Asda: hot and spicy prawns £3.49 for 350g, mini party pizzas 99p for 275g, mini garlic/cheese bread slices, £1.39 for 200g, gateaux with four flavours £1.99 for 12 portions.

Harrods: smoked lamb £2.99 for 100g, Negroni extra season smoked ham £4.49 for 100g, Negroni Milano salami £2.20 for 100g.

Sainsbury's: Christmas pudding ice cream £1.99 for 500ml, Chocoholics' Survival Kit £2.99, Christmas pudding flavoured coffee £1.99 for 113g, double cream 99p for 368ml.

Somerfield: pre-sliced Scottish smoked salmon £4.99 for 400g, sausage rolls 89p for five.

Co-op: family pork pie 99p, frozen raspberry Pavlova £1.79, Stilton £4.95 a kg.

Budgens: Broad Oak gammon ham 79p a 4 lb, deluxe salmon selection £2.99 for 156g, Golden Wonder crisps five-pack 75p.

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Zito's killer wins right to sue over 'inadequate' care

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A PARANOID schizophrenic who stabbed a stranger to death yesterday won the right to sue a health authority for failing to properly care for him in the community.

Christopher Clunis, 34, is seeking an estimated £50,000 for the harm to his psychological health caused by his knife attack on Jonathan Zito, a 27-year-old musician, on a London Underground platform four years ago.

His claim is being supported by Mr Zito's widow, Jayne, because it is her only way of winning money from Camden and Islington Health Authority for the errors that cost her husband his life. Under a complicated arrangement, she could benefit from the action.

The High Court judgment in favour of Clunis, who is receiving legal aid, opens the way for others to claim compensation for the distress their killings have caused them.

Judge Richard Mawrey, QC, refused to strike out the claim. He dismissed the health authority's view that it was against the public interest for killers to profit from their



Christopher Clunis, left, stabbed Jonathan Zito to death while suffering from paranoid schizophrenia

criminal acts and rejected the idea that it would "offend the public conscience".

He described Mr Zito's death as a senseless and unprovoked killing. Clunis had admitted manslaughter but has now issued a writ for "failure to care" against Camden and Islington.

An inquiry accused the health authority, social workers and police of a "catalogue of failure and missed opportunity". Clunis says that by the

time he killed Mr Zito he was faced with a medical condition that had deteriorated to the point where the police had become concerned but the authority did nothing to treat or restrain him. Given appropriate medical treatment, he would not have killed.

"As it is, the very killing of Mr Zito has caused his condition to worsen dramatically," said the judge. He followed the precedent set by the case in which a burglar claimed dam-

ages after being shot by a man exasperated by depredations on allotments where he had a shed. "The rule that a man may not profit by his crime was said, in effect, not to apply because compensation for personal injury was not a profit."

The judge said health authorities were already liable for damages if mental patients committed suicide because of lack of treatment. It was illogical for them to owe a duty of care to patients who harmed themselves but none to those who harmed others.

Mrs Zito, who attended the hearing, said she was legally unable to sue the health authority. Instead, she is suing Clunis for an estimated £100,000. His action includes an indemnity, making the health authority pay any claim she wins against him.

Mrs Zito said: "If we are not successful, the current crisis in community care will continue. More people will die through homicide and suicide."

The authority has yet to decide whether it will appeal. Health leaders reacted with dismay to the ruling, which they fear could cost them a fortune in damages.



Jayne Zito: she is supporting the damages claim of her husband's killer

Gretna records stay in Britain

A tin box of marriage records from Gretna Green, dating from 1794 to 1896, was sold at auction yesterday for £13,225. The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, based in Canterbury, beat off bids at the Newcastle auction from Canada, America and Australia, where many of the couples emigrated. Liz Bregazzi, who bought the collection for the institute, said: "We wanted to keep it together and ensure it remained in this country rather than see it split up and go into private hands."

Libel award cut

The Court of Appeal has cut to £55,000 the "clearly excessive" £115,000 libel damages awarded in the High Court last year to Barry Jones, 54, of St Just, Cornwall, after the *Sunday Mirror* accused the Moscow-based businessman of being a pimp working with the KGB.

Global attraction

The reconstructed Globe theatre in London has been voted the best tourist attraction in Europe by the Association of European Tourism Journalists. The theatre, on the south bank of the Thames, will stage its first major Shakespearean production in the summer.

Nigel's number

Nigel Bowerbank, a 45-year-old Essex businessman, paid £60,000 plus £20,000 VAT and commission at the DVLA's Classic Collection auction in London for the numberplate NI GEL, which he will mount on his Rolls-Royce. IP fetched £51,500 and IV £48,500.

Donor saves hall

An anonymous benefactor has donated £1 million to stop a Grade I listed stately home falling into private hands. Lytham Hall, Lancashire, built in 1752, will now be developed by an independent trust as a gallery and education and visitor centre.

Widow killed

An elderly widow found stabbed to death at her home had been the victim of a sex attack, police said. Alice Rye, 74, was found by neighbours in the village of Spital, Merseyside, where she had lived alone since the death of her husband ten years ago.

Lennon theft

A thief stole a pair of sunglasses that belonged to John Lennon from a display cabinet at an exhibition of pop memorabilia. The round-framed, mirrored glasses, worth £7,500, were taken from the Stanley Gibbons auction rooms in central London.

Sex and the single gene that does it all

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

A SINGLE gene controls the sexual behaviour of the male fruit fly. American scientists have shown.

The gene — *fru* — not only determines sexual orientation but almost all the steps in the male's courtship ritual.

The result is a surprise, as it has been assumed that behaviours this complex would be controlled by several genes. "This work shows that a single gene can do so much at least in fruit flies," Dr Bruce Baker of Stanford University, California, said.

Males with mutations in the *fru* gene become bisexual. However, the team reports in *Cell* that the gene controls much more than simply a choice of mate: it apparently orchestrates the neurons that control male courtship and copulation. It is also one of a small group of genes that govern all sexual behaviour, including the development of male or female organs.

Could humans have a similar gene? "In any complex organism, brain function must be controlled in part by genes," Professor Jeffrey Hall, a team member from Brandeis University, said.

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Stationery Office inquiry expected

By Valerie Elliott

THE £54 million sale of Her Majesty's Stationery Office is expected to be investigated by the National Audit Office.

According to a report in *The Economist* today an inquiry is to be announced any day after claims in the City and Westminster that the deal was "a political fix". A National Audit Office spokeswoman confirmed that the matter was being "closely considered".

Concern about October's sale has largely dwelt on the final knockdown price secured by the new owners, a consortium run by Electra Fleming. Suspicions have been aroused because the consortium offered £70 million, and original City estimates for the sale were £140 million.

But *The Economist* today suggests that the company was in "such a shambles" that any bidder would have fought hard for a lower price. The buyers were astounded by the chaos at the HMSO, which is now called the Stationery Office.

A Manchester warehouse was stuffed with 100 million wrongly printed inland revenue forms, and computers were stockpiled because too many had been ordered. Four properties owned by HMSO were not listed in the assets.

£500m spent on welfare benefit overpayments

By Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor

A CATALOGUE of error and fraud in the social security budget, including more than £500 million in overpayments, was disclosed in a report by the public spending watchdog yesterday.

For the eighth successive year Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, has been unable to give the accounts a clean bill of health. Fraudulent income support claims continue to cost the taxpayer £1.4 billion a year.

The National Audit Office report also shows a disturbing level of error in the calculation of benefit entitlements. It identifies overpayments totalling £515 million in the payment of income support and family credit alone. Much of this will never be recovered.

The Benefits Agency has yet to identify the cause of all these, some of which will be fraudulent claims. In cases of staff error, and in fraud cases where there is no prospect of recovering money, the amounts are written off. For the 1995-96 financial year about £96 million has already been written off in overpayments, comprising £62 million attributed to staff error and £34 million in debts deemed uncollectable.

But on income support claims alone, more than a fifth of all assessments were

wrong. The agency allows for a 13 per cent margin of error, so the 21.9 per cent figure is causing serious concern.

Despite the efforts of Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, to reduce benefit fraud, it remains a big drain on the budget. Sir John approved the measures being taken to prevent fraud, saying that for every £1 spent the Benefits Agency recovered £5. His report also suggests that £37 million spent on invalid care allowance may be fraudulent. He is expecting significant discovery of fraud in claims for disability living allowances. The Benefits Agency has been reviewing the payments but has yet to analyse the findings.

The National Audit Office recognises the difficulties in controlling demand-led spending, but hopes that the new benefit payment card will help to produce more reliable spending forecasts.

But Sir John indicated that he had had no choice but to qualify this year's audit because of the overspend and the "material error" in income support and family credit, and because benefit expenditure

was "materially affected" by fraud.

On income support, the overpayment was £485.4 million, while underpayments were £167.5 million. These errors represent 3.8 per cent of the total £17 billion allocated for income support payments.

On family credit, errors were found in 10.6 per cent of all awards. Some £29.8 million related to family credit overpayments, while £11.6 million related to underpayments. This represented 2.4 per cent of the total £1.7 billion spent on family credit.

Sir John said in his report: "I share the Benefits Agency's concern at the scale of fraud and support their work to estimate the level of fraud in individual benefits and to improve their anti-fraud measures. In view of its importance I shall continue to monitor progress closely and will continue to keep Parliament informed of developments."

He added: "However... in view of the level of fraud disclosed by the Benefits Agency's work, I have no alternative but to qualify my opinion on this account."

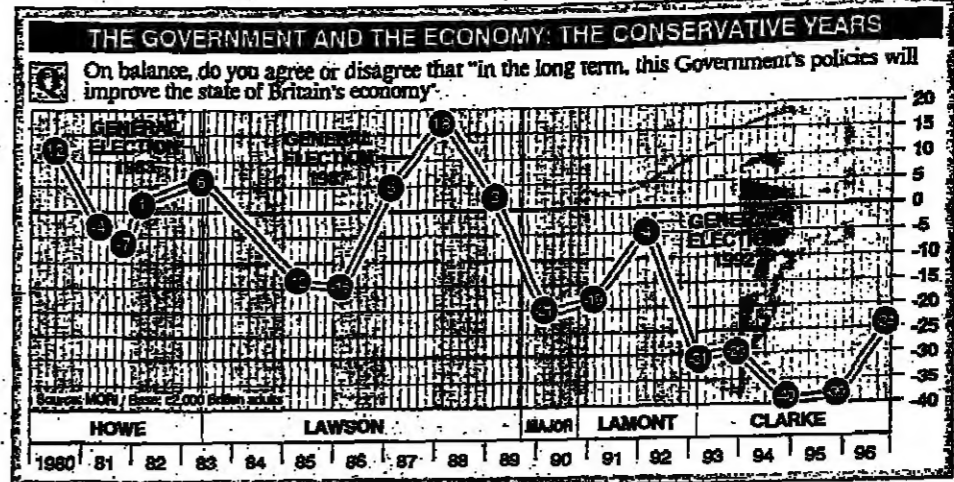
Sir John also urged the agency to take further action to reduce the huge backlog of overpayment cases awaiting investigation to determine whether the money should be recovered or written off.

Poll shows huge Tory task on economy

By Arthur Leathley, Political Correspondent

CONFIDENCE in the economy fell after the Budget last month, with most people expecting to be worse off as a result of Kenneth Clarke's proposals. Fifty-four per cent thought that the Budget would be bad for them personally, while 20 per cent expected to benefit.

According to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*, the lead on the economy that the Conservatives gained over



Labour in July has again slipped, with only 28 per cent believing the Tories have the best economic policies, compared with 31 per cent backing Labour.

The net balance of those who considered the Budget good for the nation, minus

those viewing it as bad, stood at minus 23, the best figure in response to any Budget this Parliament.

With the economy ranking as one of the most important issues for voters, the poll emphasises the size of the Conservatives' task compared with the run-up to past elections. On the key figure indicating whether people think the economy will improve during the next year, the poll gives a rating of minus 9, achieved by subtracting those who think it will get worse from those who think it will improve. In recent months the "economic optimism index" has been evenly balanced.

As in each of the run-ups to the past three general elections, the public view of the Government's economic performance is slowly improving. However, the base from which the Tories party is working is lower than ever before.

The Government stands at a net balance of minus 24 when people are asked whether they think its economic policy will lead to long-term improvements for the country. After the final Budget before the 1992 election, the figure was minus 4. Before the Budget preceding the 1987 election, the Government's

rating was plus 5. In 1983 the party stood at plus 6.

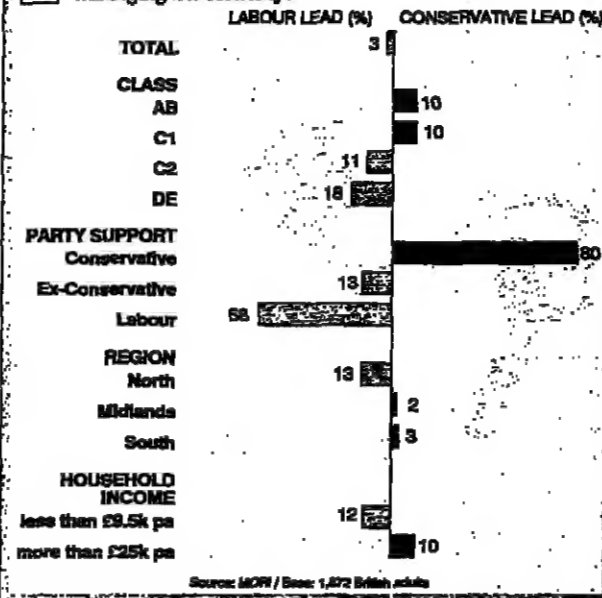
Mr Clarke's own rating has also slipped. Although the Chancellor substantially improved his personal rating last month to minus 4, compared with minus 29 in 1995, it fell back markedly this month to minus 17. Even so, with 34 per cent of those questioned saying they are satisfied with his performance, Mr Clarke's performance still outstrips that of John Major, whose satisfaction rating has slipped to 30 per cent, down by six points on last month.

The December poll reveals an unprecedented rise in the importance of Europe as an issue of public concern. In the wake of continuing infighting within the Tory party, the subject is ranked by voters as the second most important issue, trailing only behind the health service. With 38 per cent of people registering Europe alongside education as one of the most important issues facing the country, the topic has reached its most prominent level in public perception since it first featured in MORI polls a decade ago.

□ MORI interviewed 1,872 adults at 165 sampling points from December 6 to 9.

MANAGING THE ECONOMY: THE BATTLEGROUND

Q Which party do you think has the best policies on managing the economy?



'Poorest will gain nothing from the minimum wage'

By Dominic Kennedy, Social Affairs Correspondent

A MINIMUM wage of more than £4 an hour would mainly benefit the wrong people, doing little to narrow the gap between rich and poor, according to a report.

The unexpected findings, published today by the respected Institute for Fiscal Studies, may embarrass the Labour party, which is committed to eradicating low pay. The paradox arises because of the nature of poverty in Britain, where unemployment has a greater effect than poor earnings.

The poorest families tend to have no work, so a minimum wage is irrelevant to them. But the better-off households include many with two earners, one of whom may be low-paid and likely to benefit from a minimum wage. The biggest group of low earners are young single people living at home with their parents, who subsidise their lifestyle.

Amanda Gosling of the institute said: "The central argument for a minimum wage is a social justice one. Because many of the poor are not in work, a minimum wage is not a good way to redistribute income from the rich to the poor. Most of those who gain will be couples where both partners work and young single people living with their parents. These people are richer than the unemployed or many pensioners."

Although a minimum wage will never improve the incomes of those who do not work, it might harm them by increasing prices on goods and services produced by the low-paid.

Most supporters of a minimum wage want it to be set at half average earnings, but that figure differs widely depending how it is calculated. Labour has refused to specify an amount, but is reported to

prefer between £3 and £3.50 an hour, which is half the average wage of all adult workers, including pensioners. The Trades Union Congress wants £4.26, based on half the earnings of full-time working men.

Because the proportion of poorly-paid workers is bigger than during the mid-1980s, even a minimum wage set at £3 would affect 7 per cent of workers. At £4.50, it would help 40 per cent of working women and 20 per cent of working men.

A minimum wage could help the Department of Social Security by reducing the need for in-work, means-tested benefits. Unemployment is unlikely to be affected by a moderate minimum wage, according to recent research.

□ Fiscal Studies (IFS, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC2E 7AE; 01) 274 8800

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Trade pact will scrap tariffs on info tech

NEARLY 30 countries had night on the historic trade pact, which will scrap tariffs on \$200 billion of information technology products, including a triumphant World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Sir Leon Brittan, European Trade Commissioner, said yesterday: "The pact is a triumph for the information technology industry, and a catalyst for growth. As such, it is good for the world economy."

Charlene Hackett, acting UK Trade Representative, said the pact was far beyond the scope of tariff reductions. "It gives us a new dimension to our trade relations," she said. "It doesn't mean we are not going to pursue our own trade agreements with the EU."

The proposed trade liberalisation pact, which covers a single market, will be a catalyst for growth. As such, it is good for the world economy. The pact is a triumph for the information technology industry, and a catalyst for growth. As such, it is good for the world economy.

The pact is a triumph for the information technology industry, and a catalyst for growth. As such, it is good for the world economy. The pact is a triumph for the information technology industry, and a catalyst for growth. As such, it is good for the world economy.

Chirac picks 'tame' questioners for his pep talk on TV

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

EVEN before he hit the airwaves last night in a televised attempt to restore confidence in his battered Government, President Chirac was already under attack for selecting "tame" interviewers rather than face the sharp-tongued veterans of the French media.

Critics quickly pointed out that the five questioners hand-picked by the President's advisers for last night's live 90-minute broadcast, the first time M Chirac has addressed the nation at length since July 14, were all young and relatively inexperienced.

"Is it reasonable to allow the President to choose the journalists who will question him on television? That is not how modern democracies work," argued Jean-Michel Thenard, of the left-orientated *Libération* newspaper.

The Government rejected charges that the interview, filmed amid the splendours of the Elysee Palace, was a stage-managed piece of theatre designed to demonstrate President Chirac's continued commitment to economic and monetary union (EMU) on the eve of the European Union summit in Dublin.

Even with a panel of docile interviewers, Chirac faced an uphill task in his efforts to lighten the mood of national pessimism and restore his own waning credibility. De-

spite offering hints of a "surprise" in the interview to officials made it clear that M Chirac would not outline any radical new policy initiatives. Rumours of an imminent reshuffle, a referendum, or a dissolution of parliament and an early election were all dismissed.

Record-breaking levels of unemployment, weak economic growth, industrial unrest, fears of Islamist terrorism and a wave of damaging corruption scandals have prompted what *Le Monde* called "an unprecedented loss of confidence", which the President's expected mantra on the need for fiscal austerity in the drive for a single currency is most unlikely to alleviate.

Faith in the Government has been further undermined by the recent botched privatisation of the Thomson electronics and defence group, internal sniping within the ruling Gaullist party, and mounting debate over the "franc fort" policy linking the French currency with the mark and the waning long-term benefits of EMU.

Last night's media exercise, carefully orchestrated by M Chirac's communications advisers—his daughter, Claude, and spin-doctor Jacques Filhen—was billed as a pre-Christmas pep talk and there-

by session, an opportunity to explain and defend government policy, not alter it.

However, the latest opinion polls suggest that the public has already heard, and largely rejected, the Government's explanations. Confidence in M Chirac and Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, slumped again in a survey released on Wednesday, and another poll showed that 54 per cent of voters now believe M Juppé should be sacked.

Barely a year and a half into his seven-year term, M Chirac and his advisers are painfully aware of the need for a bravura television performance to lift the nation's sagging spirits.

As *Le Monde* newspaper declared darkly: "Faced with a deeply confused and angry public, Jacques Chirac must reassure and convince us that he knows where he is going and that he has taken in hand the destiny of France."



A Siberian tiger, chicken in mouth, at Harbin Tiger Park in Heilongjiang province, northeast China. The park rescued 50 of the starving animals from a breeding farm which suffered cash problems when the Government banned using tiger body parts to make traditional medicines

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Police bar march to home of Milosevic

FROM JAMES PETTIFER IN BELGRADE

TENS of thousands of mostly young demonstrators poured through central Belgrade yesterday in protest against the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. The nationwide column of marchers wound round the main central landmarks like a great human snake, bringing the city to a halt.

Heavily armed riot police turned demonstrators away as they tried to march on President Milosevic's home in the city's Dedinje district. The confrontation stayed peaceful. Most protesters stayed well back as their representatives negotiated with police blocking entry to the district.

Mr Milosevic is relying on a heavy police presence to keep order in central Belgrade, although I saw conscripts in lorries in the key southern industrial city of Nis yesterday. The police have more than adequate resources, with more men in the police these days than in the army. "The young people are managing to keep up their enthusiasm as the icy Serbian winter begins. I don't think we will give up, but then neither will he. Milosevic is waiting for us to go home for Christmas," Dušan Vranic, a philosophy student, said. The dilemma of the protesters is that, without support from the industrial workers or foreign governments, or both, Mr Milosevic can sit out protests more or less indefinitely.

Their anger has shifted from Ivor Roberts, the British Ambassador, who was pictured last week in an opposition newspaper as a pig sharing a trough with Mr Milosevic, to the Americans. President Clinton cancelled a visit to Belgrade today by John Kornblum, his Balkan envoy, but otherwise verbal threats about reintroducing sanctions are the name of the game in Washington.

It is a game, President Milosevic knows well how to play. Young Serb dissidents like Ivo, a waiter, see it as a weak response to the situation: "The Americans would not know what to do without Milosevic to hate. I think they think he will rule Serbia for 500 years and the Serbian people will be slaves to him. Well, we are not."

Action on the industrial front is more difficult to find than among the young and middle-class. Some factories held short strikes yesterday, but the trade unions have yet to show they are able to organise a national protest.

□ Sarajevo: Bosnia's collective presidency agreed yesterday to nominate a Muslim and a Serb as joint Prime Ministers. They are Haris Silajdzic, former Prime Minister of Bosnia, and Boro Bosic, a Serb and former manager of a power plant. (Reuters)

Trade pact will scrap tariffs on info tech

FROM BRONWEN MADDOK IN WASHINGTON

NEARLY 30 countries were last night on the brink of an historic trade pact to scrap tariffs on \$600 billion (£364 billion) of information technology products — so marking a triumphant start for the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Sir Leon Brittan, the European Trade Commissioner, said yesterday: "It will be good for the information technology industry, and will act as a catalyst for industrial growth. As such, it will be good for the whole world economy."

Charlene Barshefsky, the acting US Trade Representative, said the benefits would far exceed the savings from tariff reductions. "The extent of tariff savings, which I guess would be quite hefty, doesn't begin to measure the ultimate economic benefits of agreements of this sort," she said.

The proposal, the largest trade liberalisation pact for a single industry, would stimulate world trade in a huge range of high-technology products by lifting tariffs within five years.

The agreement to scrap tariffs on 180 products was reached at the WTO's inaugural meeting in Singapore despite disputes between the United States and the European Union, which had threatened to derail the talks. The products covered by the Information Technology Agreement include digital photocopiers, fibre-optic cables, computer monitors and software, telecommunications equipment and semiconductors. The final compromise excluded consumer electronics and audio materials.

The cuts would take place in four stages beginning next July and ending in January 2000. Other signatories included Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Canada and Australia.

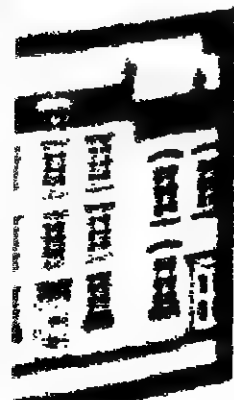
Officials said additional support from India and Mexico would be crucial as it would lift the information technology trade to almost 90 per cent, the level required if the pact is to take effect.



Barshefsky: benefits exceed tariff savings

I gain nothing minimum wage

AGENCY



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Treaty draft leaves Major with fewer chances to play a sceptic hand

FROM PHILIP WEBSTER
IN DUBLIN

JOHN MAJOR has fewer targets to attack than he might have expected when he makes what could be his last appearance at a European Council summit, in Dublin today and tomorrow.

If the general election goes Labour's way, Tony Blair will be in Britain's negotiating seat in six months' time when the final seal should be put on the new treaty to shape Europe's destiny into the next century.

The possible change of govern-

ment has undoubtedly had a bearing on the slow pace of negotiations, with some countries clearly believing, rightly or wrongly, that Mr Blair will be more amenable to change.

But the Irish version of the draft treaty, to go before the leaders this afternoon, at least offers Mr Major a handful of so-called "show-stoppers" — issues on which he feels so strongly that he would veto them if necessary. Mr Major will, in any case, open his speech today

by making plain that Britain under his leadership cannot agree to any new treaty until his demand for an opt-out from the European Court of Justice ruling — imposing the 48-hour week — is met.

The controversial plans to abolish all frontier controls in the European Union is a godsend to Conservative strategists looking for issues on which Mr Major could happily flaunt his Eurosceptic credentials. It is a subject, however, on which there is little clear water between the parties. Labour has also declared its opposition.

More promising — in terms of a spat between the two parties — is the proposal in the draft for a new "employment chapter", creating a tier of bureaucracy responsible for co-ordinating employment policy across the EU.

Mr Major also opposes plans to set up a European police force, although he does favour greater co-operation through Europol, the European police agency.

On extending qualified majority voting, it will be surprising if Mr Major does not again make plain that he is against any weakening of the veto. The flashpoints are:

□ **Border controls:** the treaty says all controls, including passport checks, are to be abolished by 2001. One external border with common rules on visas will apply.

□ **Immigration and asylum:** common entry and residence conditions and procedures for issuing visas. One policy on asylum.

□ **Law and justice:** common action on all forms of co-operation between competent ministries and judicial authorities.

□ **Employment policy:** members required to co-ordinate employment policies with new committee in Brussels to issue guidelines.

□ **Common foreign policy:** treaty proposes machinery for increasing international influence with ap-

pointment of high-level figure. Majority voting for decisions, provided they were agreed by all.

□ **National veto:** No text yet, but Irish presidency says it is essential to make significant progress on qualified majority voting.

□ **Britain opposes any erosion of the right to veto.**

John Redwood and
Hervé de Charette, page 18
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Kohl fuels fears of war to drum up support for euro

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, girding himself for a difficult Dublin summit, yesterday resorted again to the double-edged rhetoric of war and peace, giving a warning that tighter European integration was the only alternative to resurgent, potentially violent, nationalism.

The opposition Social Democrats and Greens launched into the German leader after he presented his government declaration on Europe to parliament yesterday, but the criticism concentrated on the neglect of unemployment rather than on economic and monetary union principles.

Herr Kohl, as he heads for a summit that will signpost the future of the euro, seems to have rallied support from his parliament to push hard for a tough stability pact. In the German view this pact should be able to impose sanctions, more or less automatically, on EMU members with lax fiscal discipline.

Joschka Fischer, the Green party leader, believes that Herr Kohl is being too rigid and accused both Bonn and the Bundesbank of indulging in ritualised stability fetishism.

An opinion poll published yesterday demonstrated how the domestic pressure is mounting on the Chancellor to fight for a strong euro. According to the Allensbach Institute, 53 per cent of Germans expressed fears about monetary union in October 1995, 57 per cent in April 1996 and about 61 per cent of Germans today

say they are alarmed. Out-

right rejection of the euro was registered by 47 per cent of Germans; support by only 26 per cent. When the word "Europe" is put to Germans, 52 per cent think first of crime, 79 per cent of excessive bureaucracy, and only 29 per cent associate it with good living standards.

The Chancellor, then, is squeezed between an increasingly sceptical German population and his increasingly irritated European partners. "I am confident that we will find a solution that will show all citizens the determination of the European Union to create a euro with long-term stability," he said. The wary popular mood shows why the German political class has



Mitterrand: he said that "nationalism is war"

been so determined to exclude the possibility of postponing EMU from public debate.

Jacques Santer, the President of the European Commission, tried in a press interview yesterday to persuade the Germans that there was no real alternative to starting EMU on time. "A postponement would have serious consequences, not only economic ones but political ones... you can't just stop the clock for a couple of hours or a month as they do in agricultural policy. It would take a whole generation before the subject was back on the agenda."

Herr Kohl has been soft-pedalling his references to EMU and European political union as an alternative to a fractious Europe riven by hostile coalitions. Yesterday, however, he returned to the old rhetoric — "not so much sabre as ploughshare rattling" in the words of one crusty diplomat watching the debate — on the ground that only fear of war can now out-trump the German fear of losing the mark.

The concept of the European Union is the only way we can set ourselves against nationalism, power politics and war," said the Chancellor to applause from his own ranks. Quoting with approval from his late friend François Mitterrand — "Nationalism is war" — Herr Kohl said that the past continental wars imposed a historical duty on Germany. "We have to build a common European house with effective institutions and shape the will for common action."



Kenneth Clarke arrives in Dublin for a finance ministers' meeting before the summit

Former sideshow elbows its way into the spotlight

BY ROBERT WORCESTER

EUROPE is seizing people's attention as a political issue after two or three decades as an "also ran". Nearly one person in four, 24 per cent, now believes that Europe is the single most important issue facing Britain.

This is an all-time record figure, according to MORI's December poll for *The Times*, exceeding levels seen since the referendum of 1975. Europe is now thought by twice as many people as last month to be the top issue facing the country. Unemployment at 16 per cent, law and order at 14 per cent and healthcare, education and the economy, all at 9 per cent, trail behind as an issue.

When asked what they see as other issues facing Britain and all these are combined, 38 per cent mention the European dimension, second only to the healthcare issue at 42 per cent.

While this exceptionally high level is no doubt in part a reflection of the media coverage of Tory splits, it also signals the focusing of people's minds on the imminence of a general election.

The argument on Europe seems now to be fast catching the public's attention. This is especially true of Conservative supporters. Nearly half, 49 per cent, named Europe as an important issue, as did 47 per cent of the Tory switchers, the key group who said they voted Conservative in 1992 but do not intend to do so again.

My belief is that Europe is more of an "issue" than any other issue. The importance is the cause of Tory division rather than a banner behind which floating voters might rally.

Voters react strongly against divided parties, and the European question has become a symbol of the divisions in the Conservative Party in recent months.

When MORI last tested the image of the parties two months ago, 43 per cent picked out "divided" as a description fitting the Tories, compared with 25 per cent who said Labour was "divided". By contrast in September 1991, a few months before the 1992 election, only 14 per cent thought the Tories divided, compared with twice as many, 29 per cent, who thought Labour the divided party.

Other measures find that opposition to the European Union has been steadily rising. A MORI survey at the end of November found that, if a referendum on staying in the EU were held, Britain would vote "yes", but only by 52 per cent to 48 per cent.

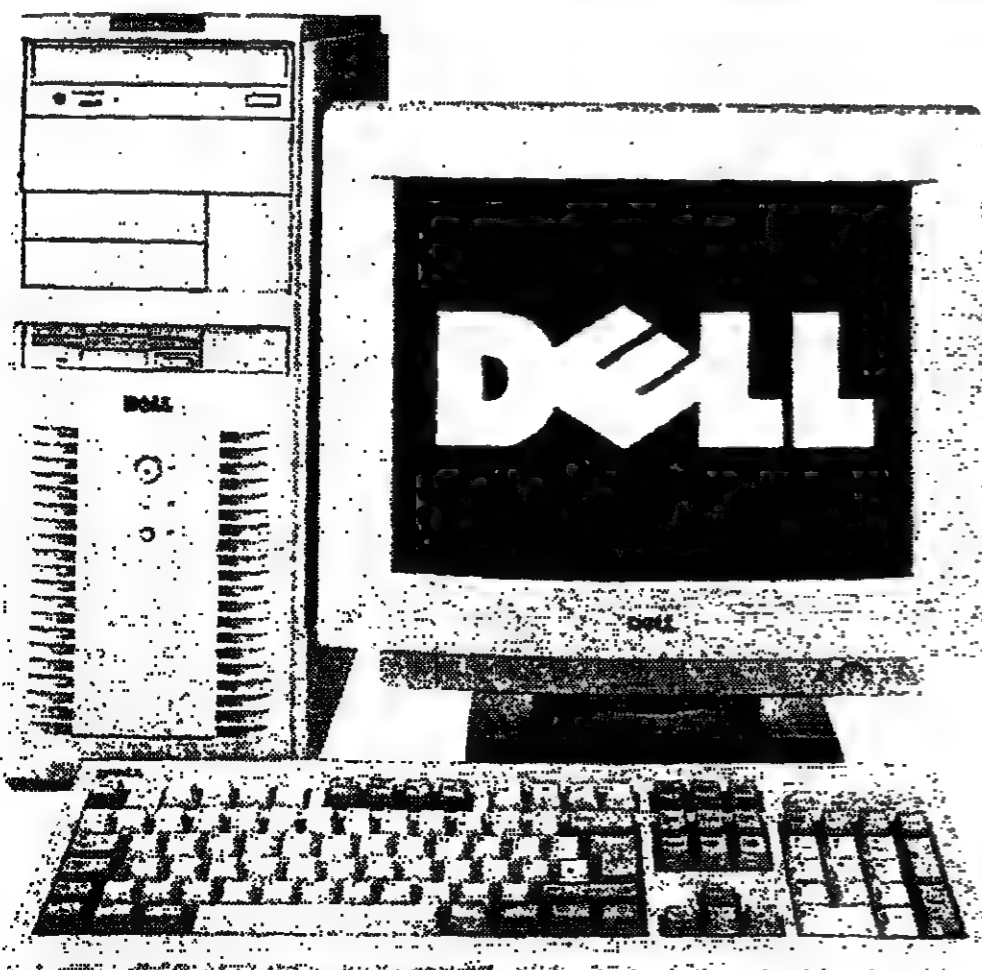
If there were a referendum on joining a single currency, 64 per cent said that they would vote against it and under a quarter would be in favour.

For most voters, Europe is probably not yet a single issue powerful enough to swing their vote, especially as none of the major party's policies is fully in line with the current mood.

But this month the Referendum Party reached 2 per cent in voting intentions for the first time, which may be a sign of a more general mobilisation of Euro-sceptical opinion.

□ The author is chairman of MORI.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY DECEMBER 13 1996

Wickes seeks £53m and gives final warning to 13 staff

By Jason Nisbet

WICKES, the DIY retailer that admitted it had overstated its profits for three years, has issued final warnings to 13 staff in its buying department. These come on top of the resignations of eight senior directors that followed the group's investigation into the scandal.

Wickes founder, said the warnings were supposed to be "corrective action". Mr Grimsey said: "We drew a line where people were acting under instruction." He said the Serious Fraud Office was taking a similar view in its investigation and these "minnows" would be asked to give evidence in any potential trial rather than be the subject of any prosecution. Wickes has received the repayment of a £1.2 million bonus paid to Mr Sweetbaum, and Trevor Llewellyn, the former finance director, is also paying back £485,000 he received.

An investigation for Wickes by Price Waterhouse, the accountants, and Linklaters & Paines, the solicitors, revealed that senior management was aware of accounting irregularities six months before shareholders. Mr Grimsey said that Wickes had also received a number of expressions of interest from potential bidders, but no formal offers. He said the job was to restore shareholder value before any bid could be considered. Wickes has renegotiated 93 per cent of its controversial buying contracts, which involved suppliers paying an upfront fee in exchange for sales to Wickes.

Bill Hoskins, the new finance director, admitted that some of these deals involved repayments to the suppliers but that the group now knew how much it was paying for goods and so could manage its business accordingly. Wickes also launched a one-for-one rights issue to raise £53.2 million to refinance its balance sheet. The shares are issued at 15p each, compared with a price of 67p when Wickes was suspended in June, but there will be an immediate one-for-ten consolidation so the new shares will be priced at 150p.

The fund raising will leave Wickes with £37 million of debt. The group admitted that the investigations and restructuring after had cost Wickes £6.58 million. These costs, along with other write-offs, losses at the US and European businesses, and general operating losses, meant that in the ten months to September 28 Wickes lost £52.7 million before tax. This compares with a restated loss of £276 million in 1995. Loss per share was 13.6p and there is no dividend. The new management is predicting that the company should lose no more than £50 million for the whole of 1996. Mr Hoskins said that once all the corrective action, including selling the loss making overseas business, had taken place the group should break even and would then work to restore its profitability.

Pennington, page 25

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET	
FTSE 100	3990.7 (+8.3)
Yield	3.95%
FTSE All share	1955.25 (+4.11)
Nikkei	20501.10 (-57.18)
New York	
Dow Jones	8367.32 (-15.00)
S&P Composite	738.73 (-2.00)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5.75% (5.75%)
Long Bond	98.15% (98.15%)
Yield	8.63% (8.63%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-mth Interbank	8.75% (8.75%)
Life long gilt	108.75 (109.75)

STRESS IND	
New York	1.8570 (1.8532)
London	1.8588 (1.8557)
DM	2.5501 (2.5518)
FF	8.6510 (8.6390)
SP	2.1781 (2.1740)
Yen	113.59 (112.77)
S Index	93.1 (92.8)

US \$ DOLLAR	
London	1.8430 (1.8379)
DM	8.2170 (8.1970)
FF	1.3135 (1.3095)
Yen	113.59 (112.77)
S Index	93.1 (92.8)

Tokyo close Yen 112.80	
14.55 bid	14.55 bid
Brent 15-day (Feb)	821.08 (821.08)

GOLD	
London close	638.45 (638.25)

* denotes midday trading price

CBI forecasts rate rise as inflation sticks

By Philip Bassett and Janet Bush

INFLATION was stable in November, having jumped sharply in October, but business leaders yesterday forecast that interest rates will have to rise before the general election to head off price pressures.

Headline retail price inflation stayed at October's 2.7 per cent rate, while the underlying rate, which the Government aims to get to 2.5 per cent or less, stuck at 3.3 per cent, the Office for National Statistics said.

Although the two main measures of inflation were exactly in line with City forecasts, economists were somewhat negative. They expressed disappointment that a sharp fall in industry's imports bill had not fed through to lower prices on the high street and suggested that Kenneth Clarke's aim of bringing underlying inflation down to its target range by the end of this parliament looks increasingly testing.

In spite of this, the Chancellor and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, left rates on hold when they met on Wednesday. The Confederation of British Industry yesterday raised its growth forecast for the economy this year from 2 per cent to 2.4 per cent, because of rising incomes and larger than expected falls in unemployment.

In their new forecast, CBI leaders said that headline inflation would end this year at around November's level but then rise to 3 per cent next year and to 3.3 per cent the year after, pushed up by stronger growth and consumer spending. The CBI said that underlying inflation would remain above the midpoint of the target range throughout the period.

The CBI said that its forecasts rested on the assumption of base rates rising by a further quarter point to 6.25 per cent in the first quarter of next year, with a further rise to 6.5 per cent expected in the second half. Although CBI leaders made clear that they saw no need for an interest rate rise now, they accepted that "modest" upward moves in rates over the next year will be necessary to contain inflation.

They said: "With output continuing to grow strongly, and with inflationary pressures starting to edge up, in part due to the projected weakening in sterling next year, base rates are expected to be raised to 7 per cent in 1998."

Sterling's recent appreciation has produced industry's worst export order book for almost three years. The CBI's latest monthly trends inquiry, published yesterday, showed a deterioration in overall demand in December, with a sharp drop in export order books to the lowest level since February 1994.

The CBI left its growth forecast for next year unchanged at 3.1 per cent and published its first estimate for growth in 1998, at 2.7 per cent. Both these figures are significantly below the Treasury's forecasts of 3.5 and 3 per cent, respectively.

IBM to put \$350m into new centre

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

IBM, one of the world's leading information technology companies, is to invest \$350 million in a new manufacturing and services centre in Dublin. The centre will generate almost 3,000 jobs within the next five years, making it one of the biggest electronic projects ever secured by the Irish Republic's job creation authority, the Industrial Development Agency.

PPI administrators taking Turkey to European court

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE administrators of Polly Peck International (PPI), the company formerly run by Asil Nadir, are taking Turkey to the European Court of Human Rights. Voyager, a PPI holding company registered in the Isle of Man, is claiming that its rights as a shareholder have been consistently violated by the Turkish courts in the six years since PPI collapsed.

The move underlines how difficult recovering PPI assets has become. Chris Barlow, of Coopers & Lybrand, lead administrator of PPI, said: "Given that this administration involves over 200 companies and has been one of the most complex ever, I am pleased with the progress. However, our work in Turkey has been persistently thwarted by the systematic non-co-operation of the courts there."

Disposals in Turkey could net up to \$20 million. The administrators claim that PPI companies have been denied their rights as shareholders in various Turkish investments. They hope that the European court will compel the courts to re-hear the relevant cases, or insist on compensation. The administrators have raised \$10 million from asset sales in northern Cyprus, only to run into litigation from Greek Cypriots, who have begun a High Court action claiming a right to the money. The administrators are to apply for leave to appeal.

Bookmakers rally to alternative lottery

BY FRASER NELSON

BOOKMAKERS were yesterday preparing their defence against attempts by the National Lottery to stifle the launch of '49s', a rival lottery due to be broadcast to betting shops from Monday. Ladbrokes, one of the bookmakers backing the venture, said it had secured firm assurances from its lawyers that Camelot, the organiser of the National Lottery, would be unable to pin down any legal objections to the new show.

A spokesman said: "The Lottery Act of 1993 forbids bookmakers from taking odds on the National Lottery itself. This clearly presupposes we can take bets on other lotteries, and on games where skill would not be involved. The launch of the National Lottery hit bookmakers very hard, and anything that can add incrementally to our income is good news. If 49s is a success, it stands to keep shops in business and save jobs."

IT WAS every fat cat's dream - hovering butlers, champagne on tap, a purring Bentley waiting at the door. Sir Colin Marshall and his guests would have felt perfectly at home yesterday, when they arrived at the five-star Lanesborough Hotel in London for their "windfall" breakfast.

Fat cats miss out on the breakfast cream

By Oliver August and Jon Ashworth

Sadly not everyone was there to sample the treats. Sir Colin Marshall, the BA chairman and CBI president, had invited the heads of privatised companies to extol the success of the Tory privatisations before a Labour government can burden them with a £5 billion windfall tax. A total of 80 invitations were sent out but only five wealthy heads attended. Nick Hood, the Wessex

Water chairman, was alone in publicly declaring his support for Sir Colin's initiative. Companies invited but not in attendance included: British Gas, British Telecom, British Aerospace, National Power, Hyder, PowerGen and Scottish Power. The majority of those present were fee-earning City advisers and lawyers. Sir Evelyn de Rothschild was joined by Peter Smith, of Coopers & Lybrand, and Geoffrey Howe, of Clifford Chance.

Sir Colin and his team tucked into a full traditional English breakfast - hardly the cost of a share option, at £16.50 per head. Sated, they rattled through the formal business before sauntering off to check their share options.

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Andersen wins \$4bn IT deal

Andersen Consulting has won a joint bid for a \$4 billion contract from Du Pont, the international chemical company, which is believed to be the world's largest outsourcing deal. It has teamed with CSC, an American computer consultancy, to run Du Pont's IT operations worldwide.

Aquarius value

Aquarius, which makes bathroom accessories and lampshades, will be valued at £34.2 million when it secures a full listing on the stock market next week. It is raising £8.8 million through placing 28 per cent of its shares with institutions, and is using the money to pay off debts.

Fuel import

Orimulsion, dubbed the world's dirtiest fuel, is to increase its presence in the UK only months after one generator abandoned its use. National Power yesterday won county council permission for a jetty to import the fuel to use at its Pembroke power station.

Cortecs test

Cortecs International, the pharmaceuticals company that specialises in oral vaccines and drug-delivery systems, yesterday signed an agreement with the Cancer Research Campaign for the development of diagnostic tests for nasopharyngeal cancer.

Pearl customers miss out as AMP plans to float

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

AMP, Australia's largest life assurance society, has unveiled plans to demutualise in a move that will see 2.3 million members receive shares worth an average of A\$4,300 (£2,000) in return for giving up membership rights.

About 200,000 members in the UK who have life assurance policies with London Life and AMP (UK) will be eligible for shares under the demutualisation proposals, which will be put to a vote of members next year before a planned stock market listing in mid-1998.

However, policyholders with Pearl Assurance in the UK, which is not mutual and has been owned directly by AMP since 1989, will not be eligible for the share allocation. Ian Burgess, AMP chairman, said: "While acknowledging that AMP's current mutual structure worked well in the past, the board concluded that a different structure was both necessary and appropriate for the future. The board believes that a change to the corporate structure is in the members' best interests, and that such a change is necessary for AMP to take full advantage of new and emerging business opportunities."

AMP's proposed demutualisation comes hard on the heels of similar action by rival Colonial Mutual Life, which is poised to distribute A\$1.3 billion worth of shares to its 750,000 members before a stock market float next year. National Mutual, in which AXA, the French group, has a 51 per cent stake, became the first Australian life insurer to become a publicly listed company two months ago after it demutualised earlier this year. Burgess said yesterday that AMP, which has members' capital estimated at A\$8 billion to A\$10 billion and total

assets of about A\$90 billion, will be listed on the Australian and New Zealand stock exchanges, with a London listing also being considered. The number of shares allocated to each member will depend on size of policy, length of membership and whether the member's policy is participating or not. AMP, which serves more than five million customers in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Asia, lifted profit from A\$506 million in 1994 to A\$1.9 billion in 1995. The demutualisation plan was welcomed by Australia's financial community.

Levitt faces jail if DTI wins action over ban

By Jason Nisse

ROGER LEVITT, who received just 180 hours community service after pleading guilty to fraudulent trading three years ago, is facing up to two years' imprisonment for allegedly breaching his seven-year ban for acting as a director.

The case is due to be heard at Marlborough Street Magistrates' Court in London on Monday, but it was not certain whether Levitt would appear, as he has moved to New York and is living in a luxury apartment in Manhattan. Levitt is accused of acting as a "shadow director" of International Boxing Corporation, which manages fighters. If so, this may breach the Company Directors Disqualification Act because he was banned from being a director of a company for seven years from November 1993.

Michael Jacobs, another IBC director, is accused of aiding and abetting Levitt, and three other senior IBC executives, Mark Segal, Cecil Halpin and John Wiffen, have been asked to provide explanations or statements about Levitt's involvement.

Levitt's ban was imposed after he pleaded guilty to fraudulent trading after the Serious Fraud Office investigation into the collapse of his life assurance empire in 1990. This left hundreds of people nursing large losses.

Should the case be tried by magistrates, the maximum sentence would be six months in prison. However, if it is sent to the High Court, the maximum jail term is two years.

Levitt's solicitor, John Perry, of Goldkorn Davies Matthews, said Levitt was in the US and not contactable.

Pennington, page 25

Birmingham aims for new year quote

BIRMINGHAM CITY is aiming to join the Alternative Investment Market in February in a float valuing the football club at up to £25 million. Birmingham, controlled by David Sullivan and the Gold brothers through Sport Newspapers, hopes to raise £5 million.

Between one-quarter and one-third of the increased share capital will be made available, with Mr Sullivan and David and Ralph Gold keeping control. Other staff — including Karen Brady, managing director, and Trevor Francis, team manager, will be offered share option packages. Supporters will need £500 minimum to invest. Birmingham is expected to announce profits, before transfer fees, of around £1 million on a £7 million turnover for the year to the end of August.

SFA fines Danish bank

THE Securities and Futures Authority has fined Den Danske Bank £15,000 and ordered it to pay £5,000 costs after Ole Rasmussen, a trader in its private banking division, made unauthorised discretionary deals and undertook unauthorised personal account dealing two years ago. Mr Rasmussen, 42, left DDB in 1994 and has returned to Denmark. The SFA fined him £5,000, with £4,000 costs. DDB no longer has a private banking division in London.

Irish inflation rises

THE Republic of Ireland's annual inflation rate rose to 1.9 per cent in the quarter to mid-November from 1.5 per cent in the third quarter, according to figures released yesterday by the Central Statistics Office. The unexpected rise follows a midweek warning from Ireland's Central Bank that the Government should be more vigilant about inflationary pressures in the run-up to European monetary union. The consumer price index for the quarter jumped 0.5 per cent.

Long-term care inquiry

INSURANCE companies, charities and health providers are being urged to give their opinions on how long-term care should be sold in the future. The Treasury yesterday published a consultative paper on the issue, and said that long-term care products, which are currently unregulated, might be brought under the Financial Services Act of 1986, which covers other investments. The Treasury said that consultation might take several months.

Countryside in black

COUNTRYSIDE PROPERTIES, the housebuilder operating in Greater London and the South East, returned to profit in the year to September 30, earning £3.1 million before tax, compared with losses of £10.6 million in the previous year. Earnings were 3.4p a share, against losses of 12.7p previously. The total dividend falls to 2.25p a share from 2.8p, with a final 1.5p (4.3p). The shares rose 5p to 72p. Turnover improved to £160.3 million from £148.2 million.

Kingspan in £26m buy

KINGSPAN GROUP, the building materials company based in the Republic of Ireland, is acquiring Ward Building Systems, a subsidiary of Rugby, for £25.92 million. The purchase is to be part-funded via a one-for-six rights issue at 144p a share, raising £20.4 million. Rugby is also selling ZND Bouwstaal, a German subsidiary, to management for £2.3 million and said it was seeking a buyer for Rom, its UK steel reinforcement business.

Scottish Hydro to boost drive south

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

SCOTTISH Hydro-Electric, the electricity generator and supply company, is to consolidate its moves into England by buying out its joint partner in a power station near the Humber. Hydro is preferred bidder for the half-share in Keadby power station being sold by United Utilities. The deal is likely to be worth more than £200 million.

Cross-border generation and trading is controversial because the English generators say that the rules governing purchasing are unfair. PowerGen is seeking planning permission to build a power station at Gartcosh, near Glasgow, but has encountered local opposition.

Hydro-Electric, whose chief executive is Roger Young, is developing another large power station with British

Gas and has several other joint ventures and wholly owned small stations in England.

The company is also in talks with a series of potential partners for electricity supply within the domestic market opens to competition in 1998. John Gray, finance director, said: "Alliances are the thing of the future, and with a number of ownership changes in regional companies, the possibilities are likely to grow rather than decline."

Hydro-Electric said that its pre-tax profits for the half year to September 30, slipped by 0.6 per cent, to £61.3 million, from £61.7 million. The interim dividend, payable on March 19, is being increased by 11.2 per cent, to 5.28p a share, payable from earnings per share of 12.37p (11.85p).



Roger Young unveiling Scottish Hydro results yesterday

Walt Disney president 'set to leave'

MICHAEL Ovitz is poised to resign as president of Walt Disney after just one year in the job, sources close to Disney said yesterday (Richard Thomson writes). Disney has so far refused to officially comment on Mr Ovitz's plans. However, persistent rumours that his friend and boss, Michael Eisner, the Disney chairman, has been unhappy with Mr Ovitz's performance have been only weakly denied by Mr Eisner. Mr Ovitz has upset

many inside Disney with his aggressive management style and has antagonised a number of powerful Disney executives who have made his position politically more difficult within the corporation.

The Disney president would be entitled to a pay-off of about \$10 million if the company asked him to leave. If he left of his own accord, however, he would almost certainly sacrifice tens of millions of dollars in stock options, since Disney's

shares have soared by \$20 to about \$72 since he joined.

Mr Ovitz, once one of Hollywood's most powerful agents, has been tipped for the job as head of Sony Corporation's US operations. Mr Ovitz knows Nobuyuki Imai, Sony's chairman, well and held meetings with him last week. However, yesterday Peter Wilkes, a Sony spokesman, said: "There are no plans to hire Mr Ovitz for a position at the company."

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	0.17	0.17	0.17
Austria Sch	13.82	13.82	13.82
Belgium Fr	66.24	66.24	66.24
Canada C	0.74	0.74	0.74
Cyprus Cyp	0.801	0.801	0.801
Denmark Kr	10.28	10.28	10.28
France F	6.17	6.17	6.17
Germany M	0.96	0.96	0.96
Greece Dr	3.49	3.49	3.49
Hong Kong \$	13.37	13.37	13.37
Iceland Is	120	120	120
Ireland P	1.28	1.28	1.28
Israel Sh	3.70	3.70	3.70
Italy L	2.06	2.06	2.06
Japan Yen	200.10	200.10	200.10

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□ Vultures are ready to buy DIY group on the cheap □ Euro in battle for currency power □ DTI picks up SFO slack

Getting on your Wickes

□ BYE BYE old Wickes. Hello new Wickes. A solid sensible retailer with a great name in "heavy end" do-it-yourself which has cast off the problems of the past, has a highly motivated staff, a good relationship with suppliers and a sensible balance sheet. Well, that is what the new Wickes management would have you believe. And up to a point they are right.

Bill Grimsey, the new chief executive, is so solid and roll-up-your-sleeves, that it would be no surprise to learn he had actually changed his name from Sebastian Delancey to be more at one with the shop managers. He is keen to emphasise that if Wickes is going to restore shareholder value after the disaster, as he quite rightly describes it, then this is going to have to be a bottom up recovery not a top down. The "boys and girls" in 122 Wickes stores plus the buyers, many of whom must be glad not to be clinging on to P45s, have to work their socks off to turn the ship round. Mr Grimsey and his team, which includes another "call a spade a spade" character in Bill Hoskins, finance director, need to deliver a solid platform which includes getting the City off Wickes's back and the company's name out of the papers.

The first stage of this should be achieved by raising £53.2 million from a one-for-one rights issue never mind that the shares are both split and consolidated at the same time, that is only designed to confuse you into thinking that shareholder value has been created immediately by turning 15p shares into ones priced at 150p. Wickes will end this process with net debt of about £37 million and a trading performance which, after all the exceptional losses, overseas businesses are taken away, will show the group breaking even. The target is to make a 5 per cent margin on Wickes's £400 million of sales. If that is achieved then a market value of about £100 million, which Wickes will have when its shares come back from suspension, will look far too cheap.

To achieve this Mr Grimsey has decided to draw a line under the past. Deals have been struck with the likes of Harry Sweetbaum, the former chairman, to win a modest repayment of bon-

uses, but there will be no litigation against former executives. Eight senior people have been sacked, but a further dozen, who said they were only following orders, have been let off with a reprimand and are still beavering away at Wickes's head office.

In the end, though, it does not look as if new Wickes will have much of a life. The vultures are already circling to buy the business on the cheap and ride the recovery in the DIY market with a cleaned-up company which has put its terrible past behind it.

Today Europe, tomorrow the world

□ DIPLOMATIC skill seems to be turning the European currency more French by the day. That means softer, more inclusive and more geo-political.

Germany has had to compromise heavily on the punitive, automatic stability pact rules it wanted, after it was manoeuvred into becoming a UK-style minor-



ity of one. Only smaller members with few friends have much to fear from the tough-sounding deficit limits. And even Finland's constitutional court found the pact would not be binding.

Money-market traders, at least, are becoming convinced that the entry rules laid down at Maastricht will be interpreted with a solemn Gallic blind eye, in turn earning more debts of gratitude to France. An indicator devised by JP Morgan, based on changes in bond yield spreads in the swaps market, suggests a near 70 per cent chance that Italy will join the euro and near 80 per cent for Spain. The markets may

be wrong but the inclusive view is gaining ground.

EMU's top official in Frankfurt is voicing interventionist sentiments about the foreign exchanges once confined to French contributions to economic summits. In an interview in *Le Monde*, Alexandre Lamfourey, Belgian president of the European Monetary Institute, suggests that, once the euro is established, Europe should debate with America on the dollar's regrettable weakness and use its influence to press for changes in US monetary and fiscal policies.

Once the euro becomes a soundly based alternative reserve currency, he argues, America will no longer be able to ignore the dollar's external value. If investors and traders have a choice, prolonged dollar weakness would make long-term dollar interest rates high. Either US short-term rates should be higher or America's budget deficit should be shrinking yet faster. In this new balance of currency power,

Europe would have as much influence over American economic policy as decisions taken in Washington have traditionally had over here. And to think, there are still people who think that plucky little Britain can resist the continental tide.

Executive action

□ NEVER mind that the Serious Fraud Office would find it difficult prosecuting Dick Turpin for theft, the Department of Trade and Industry is picking up the slack. Having increased the number of directors it has had disqualified by 70 per cent this year, to more than 700, it is now pursuing those who might dare to attempt to go back into business with the vigour of a sniffer dog at Bologna airport.

Stephen Hinchliffe, John Gunn and Terry Venables are among those fighting disqualification proceedings at the moment. Peter Goldie, Mr

Gunn's former sidekick, recently gave up his fight, and Tony Berry, who used to share a boardroom with Mr Venables, successfully saw off the DTI. Both Roger Levitt and Eddie Ashby, also a business associate of Mr Venables, are facing jail for allegedly breaching their disqualification orders.

The punishment, though, has not been among the most effective in the past. The DTI's action has often been cumbersome and unfocused. But a few high profile jailings might give the process some teeth. If the DTI moved a little more swiftly it might also lose its nickname, the Department of Timidity and Inaction, and fraudulent trading might actually be a crime with a punishment.

Windfall for Labour

□ SIR Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways, is playing a dangerous game. By calling all the former privatised companies together so they can moan about a windfall tax, he has reminded people that BA is a former state enterprise. And while no one previously thought there should be a windfall tax on BA, Labour's front bench might just have had a good idea...

Greenalls pours £175m into pub expansion

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GREENALLS GROUP, the pubs and hotel company, is to create about 1,000 jobs this year through a £175 million investment programme in its retail pub estate.

Lord Daresbury, managing director, said that Greenalls is aiming to open about 230 new outlets in the year, concentrating on its branded outlets, such as Henry's Table, Millers Kitchen and Keeper's Choice. He said that Christmas bookings have been strong and that the company is confident that it will continue to make progress this year. Greenalls, which owns a total of 2,360 pubs, generates as much as 20 per cent of turnover during the holiday period.

Lord Daresbury's comments came as the company unveiled a 48 per cent rise in profits, before tax and except-

ionals, to £149 million in the year to September 27. Underlying profits, excluding effects of the Boddington acquisition and exceptional costs, rose by 11 per cent, to £111 million. Overall turnover rose by 51 per cent, to £1.1 billion.

Exceptional costs totalled £31 million relating mainly to redundancy and reorganisation costs at Boddington, which was acquired a year ago for £666 million. Greenalls said that the integration had been completed ahead of schedule and that the company had achieved cost savings of £18 million.

Shares in Greenalls fell 10.4p to 591.5p, with the City disappointed by the company's failure to confirm the sale of the De Vere hotel group. Greenalls said that it would sell some of the 20-strong chain, which includes the



Daresbury: profits up

Grand in Brighton and the Belfry in Warwickshire, but did not place a timetable on the disposals.

Greenalls Inns, the managed pub division, increased operating profits by 50 per cent, to £79 million. Drinks sales increased by 7.8 per cent

in the 920-strong estate, with food sales rising 12 per cent.

The hotel and leisure division increased profits by 40 per cent, to £53 million. Premier Lodge, which owns 46 lodges, increased revenue per available room by 9.1 per cent. Occupancy rose from 72 per cent to 73 per cent.

The De Vere hotel chain improved revenue per available room by 11 per cent and occupancy levels rose to 74.4 per cent from 72.6 per cent. Greenalls said it would concentrate on improving the Belfry hotel and golf course with a view to hosting future Ryder Cup competitions.

Gearing rose to 66 per cent. Greenalls said that it would be cut to less than 50 per cent after conversion of loan stock.

The total dividend rises 8.5 per cent, to 15.4p. A 9.18p final dividend is due on January 28.

Tempos, page 26

Pifco pulls back from Kenwood

THE battle between Kenwood, the household appliances group, and its rebel shareholders took a further turn yesterday when Pifco, its smaller rival, ruled out making an offer (Keith Rodgers writes).

Pifco, which has twice been rebuffed by Kenwood after first approaching it about a merger in July, said it would be unable to make an offer unless Kenwood disclosed detailed financial information. Kenwood has refused, saying it would be "irresponsible" to negotiate with a competitor unless a firm and credible offer had been put forward.

Pifco's bid was expected to be supported by UK Active Value Fund, which holds 9 per cent of Kenwood. Michael Webber, Pifco chairman, said: "It's a question for shareholders as a whole, not just Active Value, to put pressure on Kenwood."

Gagging order fought by London Electricity chiefs

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

LONDON ELECTRICITY is fighting a Takeover Panel gagging order amid speculation about possible links with Northern Electric, the company facing a hostile US bid.

The capital's electricity supplier, which yesterday issued half-year figures, said that it was barred from commenting on business other than a brief results statement because the Panel had declared it to be in an offer period more than three weeks ago.

London's pre-tax profits fell to £69.3 million in the half to September 30, from £84.5 million, with the impact of the distribution price review. The interim dividend, due on January 31, rises 9.2 per cent, to 14.3p, although earnings per share fell to 31.4p, from 32.8p. The shares rose 11.5p to 651.5p. London said that it was pressing the Panel to lift the

offer alert, imposed after both London and Entergy, a US company, said that they had broken off talks about a possible Entergy takeover.

A Panel spokesman said that a bid was still possible; he said that offer periods were declared over once a potential offeror had said "definitively" that it did not intend to bid. He declined to say whether Entergy had been asked for a more specific statement.

London's silence added to City confusion over the strength of Northern's plans for a supply business merger. Sir Bob Reid, chairman, in the results statement, said: "We remain committed to seeking profitable and mutually beneficial alliances in supply, as a means of improving long-term returns."

Tempos, page 26

Xenova listing 'falls short'

XENOVA, the biopharmaceuticals company, completed its flotation yesterday, almost a month behind schedule, raising £22.6 million in new funds (Eric Reguly writes).

The placing, which values Xenova at about £50 million, fell short of the £25 million it expected to raise. The company, which is already listed on the Nasdaq market in the US, said the volatile stock markets, combined with tepid interest in the biotechnology sector, prevented it from reaching its goal.

Xenova placed 9.6 million new ordinary shares at 215p apiece, based on the £35.0 a share Nasdaq trading price. The placing raises Xenova's total cash reserves to about £28 million, enough to fund its research and development for two years or more. Tempos, page 26

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PORT OF PARANAGUÁ

The Government of the State of Paraná is granting the private initiative the rights to build and explore commercially a container terminal with a capacity for 250,000 units in the Port of Paranaguá, one of Brazil's largest seaports and one of the most important in the MERCOSUL, which is at present undergoing a thorough process of modernization. Up for bidding.

INTEGRATION RING

The Government of the State of Paraná is calling national and foreign companies interested in the restoration, duplication and maintenance of the roadways which make up the Integration Ring. Over 2000 km of roadways to be commercially explored by private initiative. International bidding under way.

Information on bidding editors:
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Grupo de Concessões - Curitiba - Paraná - CEP 80230-020
Telefone (041) 322 7080 extencao 2223/2144 - Fax (041) 322 9521 / 322 4086
e-mail: govpr@lepus.colepar.br

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THE TIMES FRIDAY DECEMBER 13 1996

Higher BT charges for mobile phone operators raised prices

wants to make a full bid, or at least put in an offer for its pet food operations. Dalgety has a dividend but has been overshadowed by the BSE crisis. The shares have fallen from around 444p since March. In a thin market, a total of 661,871 shares had traded by the close.

The graph displays two data series over a period from April to December. The 'Share price' is represented by a line that starts at approximately 185 in April, rises to a peak of about 210 in June, and then generally declines with some fluctuations, ending around 175 in December. The 'FT-SE 10-share index (relaxed)' is represented by a line that starts at approximately 185 in April, rises to a peak of about 195 in June, and then fluctuates between 180 and 190 for the remainder of the period, ending around 185 in December. The y-axis is labeled 'Share price' and ranges from 160 to 210. The x-axis is labeled with months from Apr to Dec.

Month	Share price	FT-SE 10-share index (relaxed)
Apr	185	185
May	205	190
Jun	210	195
Jul	185	185
Aug	180	185
Sep	185	190
Oct	180	185
Nov	175	180
Dec	175	185

NEW YORK: On Wall Street profit-taking ate into an early rally in the technology sector and strong gains in the bond market withered. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 15.00 points at 6,387.52.

...ncompaues w/p	242 1/2	+ 3 1/2
...odycode Intl n/p	110	+ 1 1/2
...NVESCO US n/p	4 1/4	- 3 1/2
...New Group n/p (500)	9 1/2	...
...tegalan Props n/p (30)	1/2	...

MAJOR CHANGES

CHANGES:

...ual Time	242p (+17p)
...ritish Gas	232p (+14 1/2p)
...rench Conn	286 1/2p (+13p)

Xenova extracted a rabbit from its hat by accepting a low price for the shares and coming to the wise conclusion that extending the offer timetable would not necessarily lure more investors. It expected initially to raise £25 million but at the placing

Harvey Nichols

FOR A COMPANY whose notoriety depends on a TVrend-up of the fashion world, Harvey Nichols has gone some way to dispelling stereotypes about folk up north. Early results indicate that the company is confounding those who predicted that the Knightsbridge store would

Even so, none of this justifies the fabulous rating. Aggressive growth forecasts might justify a forward earnings multiple of more than 27 times in a more substantial company. But, in the end, this is a small business depending on the discretionary spending of the vast middle

	Dec 12 midday	Dec 11 close	
AMP Inc	38 3/4	37 1/2	Eastman Kodak
AMER. Cng	66 1/2	66 1/4	Sales, Corp
Amgen	37 1/2	37 1/2	Edison Int
AT & T	39 1/4	39 1/4	Elect. Sys. Ry.
Advanced Labs	51 1/2	52 1/2	GenCorp. Elec
Advanced Micro	29 1/2	29 1/2	Goldhardt Corp
Acme Life	72 1/2	74 1/2	GenCorp. Corp
Amstar Inc. (GS)	35 1/2	35 1/2	Eastman

Prod & Chem	69%	69%	Bayl Corp
Altech	28%	23%	Saxon
Albano-Culver II	48%	48%	PMI Corp
Johnson's	32%	32%	PFL Group
Alcan Aluminia	34%	34%	Federal Express
Alco Standard	31	30%	Ind Nat Mgmt
Signal	68%	68%	First Nat Sys
John Co of Am	53%	63%	First Union Inc
Alcan Gold Inc	6%	6%	Flint Plst Grp
Alcanada Hess	36	36	Fluor Corp
Inter Islands	48%	48%	Ford Motor
Inter El Power	49%	49%	GTE Corp
Inter Express	54%	53%	Gannett
Inter Natl Corp	39%	39%	Gap Inc Int
Inter House Pl	41%	41%	GenCorp
Inter Inc	10%	10%	Gen Dynamics
Inter Strm	47%	47%	

Super Shredder	27%	27%	Can Mills
Starbuck	59%	59%	Can Mills
Proco	76%	76%	Can Recyclers
Lawson-Bunch	41%	41%	Can Signal
Apple Computer	27%	27%	Cannize Parts
Other Dumbos	21%	21%	Georgia Pet
Proco	4%	4%	Gilbert
Lawson Weld	36%	36%	Gleno Weld AD
Proco	29%	29%	Goodrich (BF)
Richfield	136%	132%	Goodyear Tire
Auto Deal Pro	44%	41%	GRI AD Pac Test
Proco	71%	71%	Great West Flat
Other Products	59%	59%	Mailbox
Other Hughes	34%	34%	Harroton Cement
Other Gas & Oil	26%	26%	Helmex (H)
Other Gas	47%	44%	Hercules

[illegible]

Kingston Ndrn	89	87	Int'l Flax & F
MS Energy Corp	32	32	Int'l Paper
AA Financial	109	109	James River Va
C Intl	80	79	Shuen & Shuen
X	45	46	Sedgley
Campbell Soup	83	81	Kerr-McGee
N Pacific	29	29	Kimberly-Clark
Profin Pwr	35	35	Kmart
Terpillar	76	77	Knight-Ridder
ntal & SW	33	28	Lilly (Eli)
Insurance Intl	65	62	Limited Inc
nce Mariah	88	88	Lincoln Inc
evron Corp	62	62	Litton
ryler	34	35	Ltj Califorme
mb Corp	53	52	Lochsted Martin
zco Corp	136	135	Louisville

[illegible]

ning Inc.	45	41%	Shelburne Assoc
North Cork	44	64%	Smith Corp
Corp	34	35%	Stouffville
Group Holdings	30	36%	Thompson Ltd
Inc	42	42%	Timmins Inc
to Air Lines	75	25%	Van Sten
Inc Corp	30	35%	Vari Service Inc
Steel Supply	35	36%	Waverline
Hard Dept St	20	25%	WY Times A
ney (Wash)	21	72%	Wolverine Mfg
ommission Co	31	33%	Wool Market
ilities (RA)	32	31%	WMA S
ver Corp	51	51%	WML Industries
Chemical	54	51%	Worcan Energy
Jones	33	33%	Worwood
over	35	31	Wright Solar
			Wright

Power	47%	43%	North Staff Pwr
W. & S. Atlantic	22%	22%	Northwest Corp
Power	55%	64%	Nycom Corp
Power Corp.	58%	55%	Occidental Pet
			Ohio Edison

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TRAMPUS
onable London

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Acas teamwork
— a little late

ACAS, the Government's industrial dispute-settling service, has just published a worthy tome called *Teamwork: Success Through People*. Odd to have just published it, given that it is dated September.

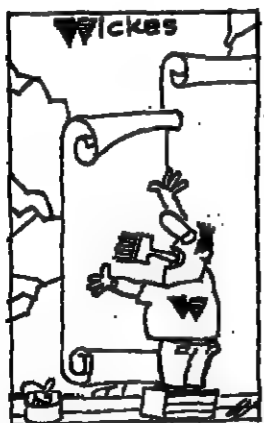
Since that time, the conciliators of Acas have been wrestling with a particularly difficult, strike-ridden dispute, between the Royal Mail and its main union, the Communication Workers, over the vexed question of ... er, teamwork. So it was felt that it might be a touch more diplomatic to delay publication.

Clean sweep

THE rescue of Sir Ranulph Fiennes from his Antarctic walk could have proved embarrassing for James Dyson, founder of the eponymous vacuum cleaner company. Dyson was backing Sir Ranulph in his quest, and had brought out a special edition of a vacuum cleaner called the Dyson Antarctic. But Mr Dyson claims that the main reason that he was backing Sir Ranulph was to raise money for Breakthrough, the breast cancer charity. True to his word, Dyson remains on track, and is to present a £1.44 million cheque to the charity before Christmas.

Party time

BLOOMBERG, the financial news provider, is offering its services free to both the Conservative and Labour party in the election run-up. Stephen Lock, Blairite managing director of Ludgate Communications, and brainchild of the scheme, suggested the idea to Labour HQ. "When banks or fund managers make a wrong comment, the party needs to be able to rebut it," he says.



Light work

A FIRST for Clifford Chance who hosted a Hanukkah party this week. Geoffrey Howe admitted he was a little perplexed when he, a Christian, was asked to make the welcome speech.

"However, when it was pointed out that President Clinton was lighting the menorah at the White House, it seemed only right that the managing partner of Clifford Chance should be doing the same thing, although I am not sure I want the analogy with President Clinton to go much further than that."

A legal 'yes'?

IF the rumours are true, Cameron Mackenzie and McKenna have tied the knot at last. After much flirting and many a false start, I am told that the legal firms have merged. Tight-lipped Christopher Powell-Smith, senior partner at McKenna, said: "I am not confirming or denying anything."

MANY thanks to Hill & Knowlton, the public relations arm of Martin Sorrell's WPP, which is extending the season of giving by including five spare Christmas cards with its official greetings card. Its legend says: "A compelling message can be delivered in many forms." Not that many envelopes.

MORAG PRESTON

ECONOMIC VIEW
ANATOLE KALETSKY
Europe would do well to ape
American economic policy

Pragmatism in
macroeconomic
management is
better than
relying on
arbitrary rules

Economists and investors these days are divided into implacably hostile factions. These two warring camps are reminiscent of the Big Endians and Little Endians in *Gulliver's Travels*. They both agree on one thing: that the American economy is unstable and threatens to destabilise the world economy. Beyond that, the two factions are perpetually at war and their battle causes much of the present wild volatility in financial markets the world over.

One faction, the Inflationists, believes that economic growth in America will speed up next year. This will push inflation out of the present 2 to 3 per cent range to 3.5 per cent or higher. The Federal Reserve will have to raise interest rates by a point or so to slow the economy and bring inflation back under control. The other camp, the Deflationists, believes the contrary: the American economy will slow down. This will undermine investment and turn economic insecurity into a political issue once again. The Fed will have to lower interest rates by a point or so to prevent an increase in unemployment.

Why should anyone care very much whether the Inflationists or Deflationists are right? Both reach the same ultimate conclusion, just as the Lilliputians all ate up their eggs. Whether by raising rates a bit or lowering them slightly, the Fed will probably keep inflation, growth and unemployment near enough to their present levels for the next few years. Experience suggests that the Fed will be able to continue its careful balancing act between inflation and unemployment until wage inflation starts to accelerate sharply, or there is some external shock such as a war. Why, then, are the markets in such a frenzy about American policy? And why are Fed officials apparently worried, too? Alan Greenspan, the Fed chairman, apparently thought long and hard last week before he issued his famous warning about the "irrational exuberance" of financial markets — a description that is actually more applicable to the overheated bond markets in Japan and Europe than to share prices in the US. Mr Greenspan seems to be worried that financial euphoria might limit the Fed's future room for manoeuvre.

As I explained on this page on Tuesday, Mr Greenspan seems to be siding with the Deflationists at present. His main concern is the possibility that an interest rate cut may be needed in the winter, but that such an easing could launch bond and stock prices into the stratosphere, creating the small but significant risk of a Japanese-style financial bubble and slump. But the Fed is



Alan Greenspan, left, taking over from Paul Volcker as Fed chairman in 1987

even-handed in its anxieties. If the Inflationists turn out to be right, Mr Greenspan has to consider their worries.

Stronger economic conditions next year could call for a small rise in interest rates, but given the present wild mood in many markets, even a small move could have disproportionate and unpredictable results. If the markets fall suddenly, consumer and business confidence could conceivably be undermined. Worse, there could be a panic among the foreign investors who have been financing the US trade deficit by buying Treasury bonds. The dollar could then fall sharply, and while this would do no great harm to America it would be a disaster for Europe and Japan.

From the Fed's point of view, therefore, it is clearly attractive to try to blow the speculative froth off the markets and prepare investors for all contingencies — leaving the Fed free to raise interest rates or lower them, as conditions require. This seems an eminently sensible approach both to economic policy and to the management of market expectations. Why then have so many commentators seen Mr Greenspan's warning as the death knell not only for the bull market, but also for the

long period of full employment and low inflation which seemed on course to run until the end of the decade? In my opinion, the outbreak of pessimism has less to do with the dangerous condition of the US economy or the supposedly speculative level of share prices than it does with the social psychology of millennial religious cults. The way the Fed has actively finetuned the American economy, avoiding the perils of both inflation and deflation, has been an affront to puritan morality as well as monetarist laissez faire ideology.

Throughout this decade Europe and Japan have suffered mass unemployment and stagnation, but Americans have had an easy, even enjoyable, ride. Yet it is America that saves too little, consumes too much and buys more than it sells abroad. Surely this cannot be right. A nemesis must be in store. On this point, as on so many others, there is an interesting convergence between the ideological puritans of the far left, who know that modern capitalism is doomed by its arrogance and harshness, and the ideological puritans of the far right, who believe that modern

capitalism is doomed by its pampering gentleness and lack of confidence. Both ideological extremes have a millennial quality. In every minor financial or economic setback they see a vision of divine retribution. The avenging angels of finance will sweep away the unrighteous and leave a purified world for those who follow the true path (these could be either the Hong Kong Chinese or the German trade unions, depending on the specific millenarian's ideological bent).

Such prophets of doom had their hour of glory during the period of global economic and social crisis from 1929 to 1932. But since then they have been exasperated by Alan Greenspan, and his predecessor at the Fed, Paul Volcker — the two Fed chairmen have successfully steered the American economy between the twin perils of inflation and depression. Again and again — in the Third World debt crisis of 1982, the property and banking crash of 1983, the stock market meltdown of 1987, the leveraged buyout boom of 1989 and the dollar collapse of 1995 — the apocalyptic thought that they heard the last trumpet. But somehow the American Sodom always escaped chastisement.

Why is it that the great reckoning has kept being postponed? Partly because the "fatal flaws" of under-investment, overconsumption and foreign borrowing are actually nothing of the kind. America has the highest level of capital employed per worker and its rate of profitable investment, taking into account intangibles such as advertising, software development and academic research, exceeds comparable figures for Germany and Japan. The trade deficit is caused largely by the unemployment catastrophe in Europe and the seemingly incurable stagnation in Japan, rather than the self-indulgence of American consumers. The US savings rate is not nearly as bad as it looks. Americans put their savings into equities, property and real assets. Each dollar of American savings goes a lot further, therefore, than the equivalent money that Germans and Japanese put in low-yielding deposits and government bonds.

But there is an issue of economic management more fundamental than any quibbles about statistics. In a world of reasonably free and flexible markets, imbalances in trade, consumption and investment can generate countervailing forces. As long as these balancing forces — currency movements, interest rate changes and fiscal deficits — are properly managed, a country can continue to grow with more or less full employment and modest levels of inflation for long periods.

Sooner or later macroeconomic fine-tuning is bound to result in a misjudgment that leads to recession or inflation. But a country that employs active and pragmatic macroeconomic management is likely to do better than one whose policymakers rely on unproven dogmas or arbitrary rules. This is the lesson Europeans should draw from America's economic success — instead of moralising about America's supposed decadence, Europeans should recognise that American economic policy is a model, not a threat, to the world.

America is far from perfect. I would certainly not want to bring up my children there. It lacks decent public services. It is marked by violence, extremism and grinding poverty. Altogether, there are many things wrong with America. It just happens that economic policy is not one of them.

UK insurance
sector gripped
by a fever of
match-making

Marianne Curphey on intense efforts to get eligible suitors to the merger altar

Pick an insurance company, any insurance company and its name will have been linked with at least half a dozen possible suitors, such is the fever of bid and rumour sweeping the sector.

Since the beginning of the year, the City's biggest merchant banks have been putting their best efforts into corporate match-making. Their attempts to bring about successful marriages have intensified in recent months, amid fears that the most desirable companies might be paired up by Christmas. None of the Square Mile's heavy-hitters want to miss out on the last big deals of the year.

The eligible companies have already been lined up and their public and private comments picked over for clues to future strategies. They are Prudential, Standard Life, Scottish Widows, Commercial Union, Legal & General, Accident, Norwich Union, Guardian Royal Exchange, BAT Industries (which owns Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar) and Royal & Sun Alliance (RSA).

The names of many more smaller companies, including Friends Provident, Scottish Life and NPL, crop up regularly as possible bid targets.

Speculation this week has pushed up the share price of Commercial Union and BAT Industries. CU has been steadily climbing to its previous year high of 677p although at yesterday's 644p it still has scope for growth. BAT's price has also continued to rise, putting on 9p to 497p, in spite of the prospect of more tobacco litigation in the United States.

These rises have been fuelled by the revelation that the two had planned a merger. CU would have bought BAT's financial services division and left BAT with some control through a minority stake. Though the talks have reportedly broken down, BAT is still keen to find itself a partner and is believed to have talked to Legal & General, CU, meanwhile, is being linked to its composite rival, General Ac-

cident. Legal & General had earlier caught the eye of NatWest Bank, which has made no secret of its wish to expand within the UK. The names of the favoured few crop up every few months linked with each other, with smaller mutual life insurers, with building societies and with banks.

In all but a few cases, the City believes they are about to embark on friendly mergers, rather than hostile bids. This is because price tags within the insurance and banking sectors have been rising quickly, and only a very brave company would feel comfortable paying the 25 per cent to 30 per cent bid premium expected from a hostile approach.

Much of the appetite for change has come from merchant banks, keen to rack up their fees, who have been pushing the line that medium-size insurance companies need to grow bigger simply to survive in an increasingly competitive market. They point to the merger in July of Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance, a friendly deal that created the Royal & Sun Alliance.

Yet, though the new company has talked about job losses, it has yet to fulfil its potential for dramatic savings. The City will be watching closely for signs of this when RSA reports full-year profits next year.

Some analysts take issue with the theory that bigger is always better. For a merger to be really successful, they argue, there must be a large overlap, which will enable computer systems to be merged, offices to be closed down and staff laid off.

This involves hard decisions and bad publicity for management. Bifu, the Banking Insurance and Finance Union, has predicted that half of the industry's 200,000 workforce will have been cut by the end of the decade. Others argue that since insurance companies' assets are its staff, mergers do not add value unless the cultures of the merging companies fit well and the employees can be persuaded to work together.

Building Societies
Act 1986.

Notice under paragraph 7 of
schedule 17 to the Act.

Notice is hereby given that the Alliance & Leicester Building Society, Register No. 737B, whose principal office is at 49 Park Lane, London W1Y 4EQ, desires to transfer its business to Alliance & Leicester plc, and that the Society has applied to the Building Societies Commission to confirm the transfer.

Any interested party may make written representation to the Commission and/or give notice of intention to make oral representations to the Commission with respect to the application.

Written representations and notices of intention to make oral representations should be received by the Commission at Victory House, 30-34 Kingsway, London WC2B 6ES, by no later than 13th January 1997.

Oral representations will be heard by the Commission on 10th February 1997 at a time and place to be determined by the Commission.

ALLIANCE
LEICESTER

Campaign is failing to grasp the nettle on equal opportunities at work

From Mrs Penny Tucker
Sir, I would like to believe that improving business opportunities for women really will produce "sharp gains" for all companies, as those involved in *Opportunities 2000* claim (report, *The Times*, December 2). I have my doubts, however.

The organisations involved in *Opportunities 2000* are self-selected. Either they have historically employed large numbers of women, or they have an ideological commitment to — or some other

interest in — enhancing women's job opportunities. As proselytisers, they are likely to regard their achievements through rosy-eyed spectacles. As existing employers of large numbers of women, their experience, and gains, may be atypical.

Families tend to be inflexible in their demands. Family-friendly policies tend to give priorities to those whose families make demands. My own experience in the Armed Forces was that the family-friendly

policy of trying to allow married couples to serve in the same area was particularly disadvantageous to single and "mobile" married women. Similarly, nurses complain about the way that the work-schedules of those without family constraints have to fit round the work-schedules of those with less flexibility.

The fact is that the opportunities of both sexes are constrained by our current belief that women have the right, if not the duty, to give up work

when they have children. This acts as a disincentive to female commitment to employment beforehand, and often results in the value of women's earnings subsequently being less than the cost or effort of replacing their domestic contribution.

It virtually forces young fathers to work long hours in order to try to minimise the loss of income, and, since earnings and promotion tend to be linked, it almost inevitably creates a gulf between the achievements of men and women.

This is a difficult issue, like so many thrown up by the question of equal opportunities. I am afraid that *Opportunities 2000*, like the EOC, avoids grasping the nettle, preferring instead to pretend that we can have our cake and eat it, too.
Yours faithfully,
PENNY TUCKER,
7 Cedar Terrace,
Thackham's Lane,
Hartley Wintney,
Hampshire.

of incorporation is often guilty merely by association (rather than by act or omission). The Isle of Man, along with a number of other responsible offshore jurisdictions, already has a relatively strong supervisory framework in place to prevent abuse of its offshore vehicles. Nevertheless, there will always be people who manage to slip through the net.

Whilst an inquiry into allegations surrounding Mil-Tec is to

be welcomed, a knee-jerk offensive on offshore centres (let us not forget that some full members of the European Union are considered to be offshore centres), and the products they provide, is unnecessary. It is often more appropriate to look closer to home when seeking solutions to offshore problems.
Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW C. CAIN,
314 Queenstown Road,
Battersea, SW8.

Offshore? Look
closer to home

From Mr Matthew C. Cain
Sir, The recent revelations about the trading affairs of Mil-Tec Corporation Limited have done little to enhance the good reputation that the Isle of Man has earned as an offshore centre.

However, it must not be forgotten that in circumstances like these the jurisdic-

Early gains trimmed by close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0
Vanguard	1.20	0.00	0.0

BANKS

Company	Price	Change	%
Barclays	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of Scotland	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of Ireland	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of London	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of Montreal	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of New York	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of Paris	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of Spain	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of Tokyo	1.20	0.00	0.0
Bank of West	1.20	0.00	0.0

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

BUILDING MATERIALS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

CHEMICALS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

DISTRIBUTORS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

INSURANCE

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

MEDIA

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

RETAILERS, FOOD

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

RETAILERS, GENERAL

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

TEXTILES & APPAREL

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

TRANSPORT

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

WATER

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

INDEX

Index	Value	Change	%
FTSE 100	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 250	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 350	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 400	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 500	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 600	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 700	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 800	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 900	10,500	0.00	0.0
FTSE 1000	10,500	0.00	0.0

SHORTS (under 5 years)

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

LONGS (over 15 years)

Company	Price	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0
Johnnie Walker	1.20	0.00	0.0
Miller	1.20	0.00	0.0
Stout	1.20	0.00	0.0
Tennent	1.20	0.00	0.0

BRITISH FUNDS

Fund	Value	Change	%
Adnams	10.50	0.00	0.0
Beck's	1.20	0.00	0.0
Brewery	1.20	0.00	0.0
Carlsberg	1.20	0.00	0.0
Guinness	1.20	0.00	0.0
Heineken	1.20	0.00	0.0

■ MUSIC

John Eliot Gardiner directs a memorable performance of J.S. Bach's Mass in B Minor

This is particularly hard on Matthias's dancers. They parade through aimless choreography that leaves each one of them out on a limb. Like narcissistic habitués of some metropolitan singles bar, they are too absorbed in celebrating their own separateness to connect with a wider world.

Yet there is a chic overlay to the proceedings. Matthias and her co-choreographer, Annabel Haydon feed off a trendy

Country	Currency	On-air			Single Day Spots		
		12 months	on average	6 months	1 year	Only 1 year	
Belgium	(BFF)	10356	45%	7534	3636	2269	3528
France	(FFr)	1088	55%	1081	571	331	502
Luxembourg	(Lfr)	9184	51%	5040	2655	1522	2611
Netherlands	(Dfl)	778	45%	426	224	130	166
Switzerland	(Sfr)	809	36%	445	232	136	177
Rest of Europe	(C)	474	91%	247	116.5	76.04	130

[illegible]



POP 1

The best records of 1996 range from Joan Osborne's *Relish*, which reinvented classic rock...



POP 2

... and the jagged peaks of emotion scaled by Longpigs on *The Sun Is Often Out*...

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 3

... to the 57-year-old Norma Waterson giving the folk treatment to an eclectic mix of material...



POP 4

... and the dark, hard, moody and relentless singles put out by the Prodigy

Of fave raves and a rave fave

Alanis and Oasis may have ruled the charts, but David Sinclair found more off-the-wall hits warmed his '96

Like most American acts in 1996, Joan Osborne spent the year labouring in the shadow of Alanis Morissette, whose *Jagged Little Pill* is now one of the biggest-selling albums of the decade. But, unlike most American acts, Osborne actually made a better album than Morissette's. It was called *Relish* (Blue Gorilla/Mercury 526 699, £15.49), and if ever a collection of songs could be said to have minted fresh coin from the ore of traditional American music, this was it.

A masterpiece which all but reinvented the notion of classic rock, *Relish* incorporated elements of blues, soul and, most intriguingly, hillbilly gospel, into a format that was as rich as it was accessible. *One Of Us* was the album's big hit, but other tracks, especially the gloriously syncopated *Spider Web* and the striding, skipped-beat rocker, *Right Hand Man*, gave a better indication of the sweeping emotional range at Osborne's disposal, and the seductive delights of her sweet-and-sour vocal tone.

In Britain the tidal wave of Britpop bands gradually slowed to a stream of stragglers. Ash, Cast and the Bluetones all made great singles and laid the foundations of long-term careers with debut albums that seemed to promise more than they delivered, while Kula Shaker, who had yet to release a record this time last year, became a gilt-edged phenomenon.

But only one new British band released an album that genuinely lasted the distance on musical merit alone: the unfortunately named Longpigs with their much-delayed debut, *The Sun Is Often Out* (Mother MUM9602, £9.99).

With songs such as *Last Myself*, *She Said* and the transcendental *Jesus Christ*, all built around the creaky guitar chops of Richard Hawley and the pleading vocal acrobatics of singer Crispin Hunt, Longpigs consistently scaled jagged peaks of emotion while never once losing the melodic plot.

Norma Waterson's near-triumph in the Mercury Music Prize with her self-titled debut (Hannibal/Rykodisc HNCD 1993, £11.99) raised a few eyebrows. The 57-year-old grandmother from Hull gave Pulp a run for their money with a collection of songs gathered from anywhere but the usual folk sources.

Effortlessly bending tunes by Elvis Costello, Billy Bragg, Richard Thompson (who played brilliantly throughout the album) and others to the service of her noble, lilting voice, Waterson conjured memories of Fairport Convention during the days of Sandy Denny, particularly with her version of Ben Harper's *Pleasure and Pain*. Her gorgeous interpretation of the Grateful Dead's *Black Muddy River* was a performance to die for.

There was much talk this year of how hardcore techno music was becoming the "new rock". Underworld's album, *Second Toughest in the Infants*, was a timely wake-up call to the legions of fans still lost in the cosy haze of Britpop, and even the king of retro, Noel Gallagher, found time to collaborate with the Chemical Brothers on their single, *Setting Sun*.

But it was two stunning singles by the Prodigy — *Firestarter* (XL XLS 70) and *Breathe* (XL XLS 80, £4.49 each), both of which topped the chart and stayed there — that truly signalled the seismic shift in pop that got under way in 1996. Dark, hard, moody and relentless, both records came tooled up with alarming videos in which dancer/vocalist Keith Flint performed with the demented menace of a satanic clown, while the machine-generated beats rained down like a piston gunning a heavy industrial pump. It was sensational stuff.

Radio programmers and industry pundits scratched their heads in bemusement, children hid behind their sofas and grown-up viewers of *Top of the Pops* complained about the decadent ferocity of it all, just like they used to in the days when pop really mattered.



That Sinclair set of searing, soaraway superstars in full (clockwise from top): Longpigs, Norma Waterson, Joan Osborne and the Prodigy

Manx treat preacher

MOST of us, when asked to describe the sound of the Isle of Man, would probably think of the roar of motorcycles at the TT races. In fact, the island has a long and distinctive musical tradition influenced both by a Viking past and its geographical position at the very centre of the Gaelic world.

Spearheading the revival of Manx music is Emma Christian, a precocious 24-year-old singer with a PhD in the medieval history of her native island, who has done much to revive what had become almost a lost art form.

Christian gave a remarkable South Bank performance with her pure, haunting voice and compelling songs from the ancient kingdom. Accompanying herself on Celtic harp

Emma Christian
Purcell Room

and recorder she performs by candlelight (requiring the presence of a fire officer on the stage throughout) and evokes mysterious, ancient pagan moods. The effect is intensely atmospheric as between songs she tells age-old legends of the dramatic history of an island which remains an autonomous Crown dependency outside both the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Her voice is as breathtakingly beautiful as anything you have ever heard from the Celtic fringe. Think of Enya without the annoying synthesizers — and then some. This is a music in which time stands still, employing ancient modal structures which predate minor and major scales.

Christian has become one of the biggest-selling names in Celtic music in America. Her new album, *Pagan Lady*, is due for release in the new year, and should put both her and her home land on the musical map on this side of the Atlantic. She is also the founder and president of the annual "Isle of Man, Isle of Music" festival, an event which draws top artists from around the Celtic world, and which next year will be opened by the King of Norway in recognition of the Isle of Man's strong Scandinavian past.

In our endless search for the exotic and the different from around the world, we often forget that we possess such jewels in the musical heritage of our own backyard. Christian is one such gem, a performer who is destined to make the Isle of Man famous once again for a lot more than motorcycle races.

NIGEL
WILLIAMSON

AN EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION THE TIMES

Win a long weekend for two in Spain

Continuing our Twelve Days of Christmas competition, *The Times* brings you the chance to win, not two turtle doves, but a long weekend for two to Ribera del Duero, one of Spain's most fashionable red wine producing areas. In addition, there are 20 runners-up prizes of a bottle of fine wine from the region.

Ribera del Duero is a land of breathtaking views, labyrinthine cellars, rich farmland and ancient, fortified villages. Perched high on the slopes of the province of Burgos, north western Spain, the Ribera del Duero wines are made in what the locals call their "vineyards in the sky" using mainly the indigenous tempranillo — or tinto fino grape — which, combined with the high altitude, cool climate and chalk-rich soils, produces their robust complex character. Of last year's top 100 Spanish wines, the first ten included three wines from the Ribera del Duero region.

The winner and a partner will fly to Madrid on a Thursday (the holiday can be taken any time up to the end of May) and travel to the Hotel Ribera Duero in Peñafiel. On Friday they will visit some of the region's finest bodegas and taste some of the best wine in Spain. On Saturday they will travel back for an overnight stay at an hotel in the centre of Madrid and visit the Prado, one of the most remarkable art museums in the world, before returning to England on Sunday.

Winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries received by midnight tonight. Normal Times Newspapers Ltd competition rules apply. Calls cost (per minute) 45p cheap rate, 50p at all other times.



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"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."
"Long past," enquired
"No. Your past."

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CHANGING TIMES

No sleep till you've finished reading the Beastie Boys' mag

All the news that's fit

Pop stars' second careers are usually unintentionally hilarious. There's the backseat driver jobs of running a studio or producing other bands' records, which pretty much every pop star dabbles in at some point. Then there's the renaissance men and women who can sing, dance and run a trout farm (Roger Daltrey), design wallpaper (David Bowie), or write vast tomes on prehistoric stone circles (Julian Cope).

And then there's the Beastie Boys — hip hop Richard Bransons with fingers in more pies than a tribe of cannibals who got a Pie Magic machine for Christmas. The Beastie Boys make Margaret Thatcher look like a lazy, dozy slacker who curled up on some beanbag in front of the telly in 1990 and hasn't got up since.

As well as their own, judiciously successful careers, they've set up their own record label, Grand Royal, with a strong bias towards self-possessed female artists (Bis and Luscious Jackson); a clothing company; a Free Tibet travelling festival that's grossing millions in aid of the Tibetans; and a magazine, also named *Grand Royal*.

The magazine is fascinating for a variety of reasons. First, it's like no magazine you've ever seen before. There are no articles about fashion, sex, style or clothes. There are no headlines squealing *Why are you so insecure and hated?* No New Lad hideousness about how sexism is OK so long as it's ironic. Instead, *Grand Royal* presumes that you have a brain, and what's more, that

that brain would be thrilled to learn about new stuff, as long as it's entertainingly written about. Thus, in the current issue of *Grand Royal*, we are given the fascinating history of Adidas trainers, a 32-page piece on Moog synthesizers and their oddball predecessor, the Theremin, and a ten-page interview with pop artist "Weird" Al Yankovich. In which no questions are asked. And how interesting are these features? Well, as a woman who gets an uncontrollable urge to run away if she looks at a plug, let alone the insides of a Moog Sonic Six, I was determined to build my own Theremin by the end of it all. Full instructions are provided.

The Boys' Adam Yauch interviews the Dalai Lama who speaks, with simple poetry, of how we could all be a little bit happier if we were all a little bit sweeter, while 20 pages on there's a profile of Isco White, an Appalachian mountain dancer who's "Tryin' to be the greatest person [he] can without breakin' the law". There's also a roundly hilarious piece on how to get into Hollywood hotels' swimming pools, including advice on which walls and balconies to jump from.

The most fascinating thing about *Grand Royal*, however, is the concept that, one day, all pop stars will want to run their own magazines. The Beastie Boys are presumably tired of having music journalists explaining the "meaning" and "context" of their records, and have decided they'd rather decode things themselves. While the majority of the

magazine is not written by the Boys themselves, their ethos shines through — fun first, music second, and the writer's ego last. It's understandable that musicians want to start taking control of their media dealings — after all, the most star can expect as a retraction of a front-page tabloid lie is the word "sorry", written in microscopic Braille and buried on page 22. And if the magazines they produce are half as entertaining, intelligent, eclectic and fun as *Grand Royal*, then WH Smith's profits will tremble.

● The third issue of *Grand Royal* is available now



CAITLIN MORAN

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POP 5

Art Garfunkel spent the past decade walking across America. Yet he still found time to make music

JAZZ 1

Mississippi vocalist Cassandra Wilson delivers a desultory performance to the faithful at **Shepherds Bush**

THE TIMES POP ARTS

JAZZ 2

New on CD: the drummer Ted Sirota and his quartet pay tribute to the music of **Ornette Coleman**

TOMORROW

Covent Garden launches its development appeal with a gala: read **John Higgins's** verdict

Why Art went off to look for America

The curly-haired guy with the voice of an angel is back - with a new album and an intimate knowledge of his native land. **Paul Sexton** reports

Art Garfunkel speaks with unsurprising eloquence about the art of vocal craftsmanship, and has a rich personal history, going back more than 40 years, in music and movies. It comes as something of a surprise, therefore, to find that his specialist subjects also include such outdoor pursuits as orienteering and topography.

Garfunkel is in London to publicise *Across America*, the first live album of his 26-year solo career. The record, containing both his own hits and those of Simon & Garfunkel, documents two concerts he gave in April at Ellis Island in Upper New York Bay.

So, at the place where generations of immigrants landed in America in sight of the Statue of Liberty, Garfunkel marked the end of a personal journey - that distinguishes him as the self-possessed and cerebral spirit he has always appeared to be.

Over the past 12 years, in some 40 different outings of a week or so each, Garfunkel has walked across America, equipped only with map, paperback, sunglasses and notebook. The experience has provided the perfect antidote to the bustle of metropolitan life, and his musical tribulations of recent years.

"In 1984," he says, "I left my apartment on the Upper East Side of New York with my new sneakers on my feet. I crossed Central Park, Columbia College, the George Washington Bridge, then New Jersey, and just kept on trucking."

"One state leads to another. In these 40 different outings, I would do a week then come home. I'd have 100 miles in me, a lot of fortification of my soul and a lot of good air. It's a great answer to the claustrophobia of New York."

Just as Garfunkel's career since

splitting with Paul Simon has produced a selection of infrequent but finely honed albums, his approach to this endeavour was equally painstaking.

"Some months later I'd find another chance. Fly out to where I left off, rent a car, get to the motel, drive to the exact spot, put the car off to the side of the road and keep trucking," he says. "I like to think of it as a Zen science. Let the shoulders fall, let the gait have no affectation, and once you're in that, when you're in the third hour, you feel like you're lifting off the ground."

Thus Garfunkel discovered the simplicity of youth by becoming, as his friend James Taylor would put it, a walking man. "I let spontaneity be my itinerary," he says. "And I can't tell you how lovely it was. You really feel that you know the topography of America, and it's meaningful. You know where the lowlands are after the Palisades of New Jersey, and how that then climbs up to some hilliness in western Jersey, and then the Appalachians series. It all becomes a topographical memory."

Such an estimable undertaking was not at the expense of Garfunkel's family life. Indeed, both his wife, Kim Cernick, and his six-year-old son James make vocal contributions to the new live album. But it did provide an escape valve for the increasing frustration of the album according to the schedule of the record company.

"I was not discouraged at all," he says. "I was encouraged because I was working on an album to be called *Songs from a*

Parent to a Child, due for release next year and his first new studio record since *Lefty*, released in 1988. The rejuvenation also has much to do with his new deal with Virgin after leaving Sony, his recording home for 32 years. "I felt misunderstood as a recording artist," Garfunkel says. "Sony was not at all my best friend, and I'm very pleased to have left it."

"I've always felt that the people like me, but I gotta get at the people through the record company - and that's been a real barrier. You can't know what it's like to make an album that you're proud of and that you've laboured over for a long time, then bring it to these executives and have them misunderstand it and send it back to you and tell you what you need to do with it. It truly breaks your heart."

His other refuge came in appearing live on stage. "In the past few years I've become a stage artist rather than a recording artist," he says. "It's really the first time in my career that I've done a lot of shows, except for the early days with Paulie back in the 1960s. In the late 1980s and all through the 1990s I must have done a couple of hundred shows, and I'm into it. I love cutting out that middle man."

Talk of "Paulie" prompts one to ask about his relationship with the man to whom Garfunkel's artistic attachment began, at the age of 11. It is only three years since the most recent of the duo's latest "come-back" albums - but Garfunkel now says that "if choice," he is no longer in contact with Simon.

"Whether being out of contact in my heart of hearts that it's a

lifelong friendship that will have a rapprochement somewhere in the not near (sic) future," he says. "I think we've ultimately turned off our followers who've said, 'Enough with this friendship with the on-off moodiness, can't you guys leave us alone on that subject? We accept that you split, now please don't have a reunion!'"

Nevertheless, he still performs many of Simon's songs from their golden days in his ser and on *Across America*. "I don't have any problem doing the old stuff," he says. "They're very good songs, they appeal to millions of people. I lost my feeling for *Feelin' Groovy* - it became fluff somewhere through the years, and I only keep it in the show as an accommodation of the fact that others like it."

"I'm not sick of *The Sounds of Silence*, though. I love to chase after the flow of *Scarborough Fair*, and *Bridge Over Troubled Water* is always that same polevault. You run down the first two verses with your pole, you plant it and you go over a 29ft bar at the end, and that's nothing less than a thrill every time you do it."

Be it such vocal athletics or his other forms of spiritual exercise, Garfunkel remains his own man, and hangs the funny looks. "I've been getting those looks all my life," he says, and smiles. "Somewhere in my childhood I said: 'I ain't going to worry about the fact that I'm singing to the beat of my own drum.' Whichever way they're swinging, I'm going to swing the other way. It's inherently more interesting."

The Very Best of Art Garfunkel - *Across America* is released by Virgin. Garfunkel will perform on BBC's *Newsnight* on Monday (7.50pm).



"I think of it as a Zen science. Let the shoulders fall, let the gait have no affectation, and once you're in that, when you're in the third hour, you feel like you're lifting off the ground": Art Garfunkel on the natural high of walking across America

Paying their dues to the Man

TED SIROTA'S REBEL SOULS

Rebel Souls (Naim CD014)
IT IS nearly 40 years since Ornette Coleman's classic acoustic quartet made the groundbreaking *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, but, perhaps

because today's revivalists prefer to revisit less free forms such as hard bop, the music Coleman made in the late 1950s still sounds oddly unfamiliar and radical.

Drummer Ted Sirota's quartet takes this music as its starting point and, despite featuring a tenor/guitar front line instead of alto/trumpet for its compelling tension between structure and freedom, the *Rebel Souls* sound is a worthy tribute to its celebrated model.

In addition to six assured originals - three by guitarist Jeff Parker, two by saxophonist Kevin Kizer and a percussive, African-flavoured piece by the leader - the band also stretches out on tunes by Coleman himself, his late-1950s bassist Charlie Haden, Sonny Rollins and Monk.

CONRAD HERWIG
The Latin Side of John Coltrane (Astor Place TCD 4003)
TO those who would object that they did not know John Coltrane had a Latin side - his "world music" exploration

tions took him to India and Africa rather than South America - the American trombonist Conrad Herwig replies: "This music is a marriage of Coltrane's musical logic, rhythmic conception, transcendental spirituality with Afro-Caribbean musical structures."

For this project he has assembled a superb band of Latin-music specialists - pianists Danilo Perez and Eddie Palmieri, flautist Dave Valentin, percussionists Richie Flores and Milton Cardona - and versatile jazz musicians such as trumpeter Bryan Lynch and baritone player Ronnie Cuber to filter such Coltrane staples as *A Love Supreme*, *Naima* and *Impressions* through smartly percussive arrangements.

The resulting album, chiefly memorable for its overall bite and textural sophistication, enables familiar material to be seen from a novel perspective.

CHRIS PARKER

Sharp and flat

NEXT time, Diana Krall will have to stay for more than one night (at Pizza Express, W1): here is a singer who has the talent to draw full houses, day in, day out.

While her new album, *All For You*, forms an affectionate tribute to the trio recordings of Nat King Cole, Krall could never be mistaken for a fusty museum curator. Her husky voice, rooted in the lower register, transforms each number into an individual and contemporary statement.

Opening with *I'm An Errand Girl For Rhythm* she flowed confidently into a drawing *Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby*, a highlight of last year's release, *Only Trust Your Heart*. The studio version contained a characteristically smoky tenor saxophone solo by Stanley Turrentine; the live version stoked up enough heat on its own.

Guitarist Russell Malone and Paul Keller took full advantage of the openings that Krall generously granted them: this was a fully integrated trio, not simply a singer plus backing musicians.

Meanwhile, those of us who have been mystified by the

extravagant claims made for Cassandra Wilson over the past five years will have been none the wiser after her desultory performance at the Shepherds Bush Empire.

Although the blues-and-roots flavour of her last two albums has won her a broader pop audience, the Mississippi-born vocalist seems more and more a prisoner of her own earth-goddess mannerisms.

At her best she is undoubtedly a distinctive interpreter of lyrics. Her achingly slow treatment of *I Can't Stand The Rain* lends the song an eerily neoteric aura. The unorthodox line-up of her group - bass, percussion and guitars - also has its merits.

Unfortunately, her infatuation with ballad tempos soon grew crushingly repetitive as she meandered through U2's *Love Is Blindness* and her own composition *Find Him*. There were no surprises, no hidden depths in her phrasing, only the same formula repeated over and over.

CLIVE DAVIS

Our Price Christmas Dilemmas - No. 4

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EDUCATION

The college in crisis

David Charter on the continuing saga of the college that could not count its students

Helen Chandler told Wrexham magistrates last week that six people's jobs at a country pub in the Welsh borders depended on her receiving a drinks licence. The court granted a temporary order to her pub manager after she explained she had been ill because of "an extraordinary set of circumstances that had caused difficulties".

Staff at Stoke-on-Trent College, Staffordshire — where Mrs Chandler is an assistant director, and her co-director at the pub, Neil Preston, is principal, and which has just announced 190 redundancies — feel her comments have added insult to injury. The redundancies come after news that the college will have to cut £8 million because its past two years' budgets have been based on vastly inflated student numbers.

Mrs Chandler has been absent from the college on paid sick leave since September, as has Mr Preston. Last month *The Times* traced the pair to the Dymock Arms, in Penley, Wrexham, which they started to renovate on their arrival this summer and had been helping to run, to the surprise of their 1,500 staff at Stoke.

They have not been seen at the oak-beamed pub since the disclosure but a clearer picture has emerged of Stoke's descent into financial crisis. At the heart seems to lie a lack of accountability at the most senior level of the kind that further education colleges last year pledged to Lord Nolan's inquiry into standards in public life that they would strive to overcome.

After Mr Preston's appointment three years ago, Stoke-on-Trent College, with 21,000 students, grew to become the eighth-largest in the country. Such was his expansionist vision that last year he announced plans for a £20 million third campus. But student numbers had been overestimated by 20 per cent.

Mr Preston was recruited from American and Wrexham College, Buckinghamsire, where one of his last acts was to appoint Mrs Chandler, his vice-principal, as acting principal. She joined Stoke as marketing manager in June 1994. The pair were later to announce to Stoke's governing board that they had left their spouses and were having a relationship.

The board saw no reason for alarm because the situation had been made clear. What governors did not know was that Mr Preston and Mrs Chandler became directors of a company called The Pub Doctor Limited on September 26 last year. The Pub Doctor bought the Dymock Arms this August. The college has not been able to answer



Neil Preston, top left, Helen Chandler and the Dymock Arms. Below, protesting students at the college. Main picture: John Bartholomew

whether this was known or sanctioned by governors at any stage. As at other further education colleges, such as Derby Wilmorton, overtaken by scandal since they all became independent from local authorities in 1992, it was a staff protest that eventually prompted governors to investigate.

Disquiet at Stoke culminated in two staff surveys. In July, more than 120 lecturers in the North union complained that Mr Preston's style was "dictatorial and bullying". George Mardle, the chairman of governors, called the survey "spurious". He resigned on September 20 after fellow governors refused to extend his appointment.

Mr Preston and Mrs Chandler went off sick on September 25 and 26 respectively, on the eve of a Unison survey showing that 97 per cent of staff lacked confidence in management. A week later the governors set up an inquiry, which later became a special committee to consider the dismissal of senior staff.

The extracurricular activities of the two senior managers are now seen as a sideshow in the tragedy that has befallen the college. However, governors find themselves handling a major disciplinary investigation at the same time as preparing a recovery plan for the Fur-

ther Education Funding Council. Mr Preston and Mrs Chandler obtained a High Court injunction on November 19, halting the special committee. This was overturned at the college's request on November 25, but delayed the committee's report, due on November 29, until next week. The funding council yesterday confirmed that it had ordered the college to repay £3.5 million from last year and would be giving it £2.8 million less than it budgeted for this year. It said the college was supposed to submit last year's student numbers by last December, but failed to do so until March. The figure was so unexpectedly low the college exercised its right to recalculate it and brought in a new system to start the process anew.

A funding council spokeswoman said: "The college did not know early enough it was undershooting its recruitment targets. The college chose to resubmit its data, which we often allow. It was confident that its system was wrong and the students were there, but the new figures showed it was still 18 per

cent under. What is exceptional about this situation is that the management of the college did not react quickly enough."

Two years' budgets were worked out on the inflated figures. The funding council could only wait for it to supply correct numbers, but made its view on Mr Preston's plans clear. The spokeswoman said: "We have never been convinced that the college needed a third campus."

The college has now dropped its expansion plan. At Derby Wilmorton College, employees were shut out from financial decisions. Michael Shattock, author of the official report on the college, saw parallels in the Stoke debacle. "Clear-

ly," he said, "the governance structures at Stoke simply have not worked. If senior staff are allowed to run a pub somewhere and if they count a phantom student body, the accountability lines through the college must be very insecure."

He questioned whether part of the problem was "governors who don't ask questions, are pleased to be invited on to a board and simply

think the dynamic principal should be supported". He recommended that every college have an effective secretary, registrar and audit procedure to ensure that real questions are asked and accurate student numbers produced.

Mr Shattock shared the funding council view that problems such as those at Stoke and Derby were not endemic among the 449 colleges, which have had to cope with enormous pressures both to expand and cut costs. That leaves little Christmas cheer for staff at Stoke and a meeting on Monday called on the funding council to arrange repayment terms that would reduce the need for redundancies.

However, the season of goodwill prompted one employee to write to the *Stoke Sentinel* on Tuesday commiserating with Mrs Chandler over the six jobs dependent on her pub venture.

"I am sure," he wrote, "that the 200 people facing redundancy at the college would all willingly put their hands in their pockets for a whip-round if these unfortunate people were to lose their jobs as a result of Mrs Chandler not being granted a licence. Perhaps in turn Mrs Chandler and Mr Preston will dip into their own pockets for a whip-round for the devastated staff."

Perhaps they will have a whip-round for the staff

Beware this state control

James Tooley sees dangers behind an attempt to raise 'standards'

Lovers of liberty should be wary of the *Standards Over Time* report and Gillian Shephard's associated recommendations. Of course, the concerns that prompted the report needed investigation. Each year, there has been an inexorable rise in the percentage of young people passing at A level and GCSE. Is this because candidates are brighter, more diligent, or are standards simply declining?

But the report shows the Government is exploiting an ambiguity in the notion of "standards" to extend its control over the curriculum in the sixth form, through the back door. Moreover, there is a danger of the "nationalisation" of the examination boards, again under the smokescreen of concern for standards.

The two distinct meanings of "standards" are clear: the "grade standard" checks whether particular topics are assessed and marked in the same ways over the years. The "examination de-

mand" asks whether topics in the syllabus are more or less demanding. To ascertain "grade standards" clearly needs candidate scripts, to see how lenient or otherwise examiners have been, as well as mark schemes and examination papers. However, the examining boards were either unable or unwilling (we have only each exam board's word that scripts were unavailable) to find enough scripts on which to make meaningful comparisons. For example, no coursework was available at all, from any year. At A level, no scripts were available from 1975, one (out of four) of the boards had none for 1985 and the others had fewer than ten each for each subject/grade.

This unavailability of archival material is scandalous. How could bodies entrusted with maintaining standards be so cavalier with the evidence? So whether grade standards have declined or not is impossible to ascertain, and the *Standards Over Time* report rightly hedges its bets here, while making the sensible recommendation that a national archive be established to facilitate future comparisons.

However, on the "examination standard" standard, the report is more adventurous. Here we see the undesirable introduction of extension of control over the curriculum at sixth-form level. Though it seems that the report is simply pointing out the "more demanding" aspects of the curriculum that have been left out over the years, resulting in a

"lowering of standards", it is in fact making value judgments about what should and should not be in the curriculum.

For example, in maths, the "co-ordinate geometry of conic sections" has been abandoned. This was a difficult part of the curriculum, so presumably its omission would make standards lower. However, algebra is also being increasingly marginalised, which lowers standards, so recommendations are given to reinforce its place in the curriculum. At English A level, students can virtually avoid anything but 20th-century novels. This lowers standards, they say, because Chaucer and Milton were hard. This is bad, so these authors should be reintroduced.

In both cases, the issue is that the Government previously lacked control over the curriculum at sixth-form level, and is seeking to introduce this, through concern over standards. The danger is that a future Chief Inspector of Schools may want to impose anti-educational proposals, and could use the precedent.

The second danger of the *Standards Over Time* recommendations is the proposed tightening-up of exam boards. It is argued that schools are "shopping around" for easier examinations so they can score higher in the league tables. It is not, however, clear that this happens. If teachers can find those easier boards and syllabuses, it is also easy for employers' associations and universities, and hence common knowledge that syllabus X from Board A is easier than others. But surely the objection is that some syllabuses are not of A-level standard.

This brings us to a less dangerous solution than reducing the number of examination boards, already only four, presumably to be reduced to two (hence nationalised) or one. The boards must be regulated, by Ofsted, to ensure that they offer only syllabuses which meet the required standards of A-level.

All that is needed is for any A-level syllabus to be registered as being of A-level standard. Schools should be able to shop around for their most suitable option, choosing from a diversity of exam boards rather than from a state monopoly.

We must not allow the Government to grab control of the curriculum at A level nor allow this dangerous step towards nationalisation of exam boards. Education is already too politicised.

The report is making value judgments on subjects

Christmas story's new look

Hugh Thompson sees new ways of acting out the Nativity

Every year at this time we hear of the end of the nativity play. The tabloid newspapers have a field day as a council or school in a culturally mixed inner-city area drops the time-honoured ritual for being irrelevant or out of date. But while the tabloids may like sensational stories, Alison Seaman, the deputy director of the National Society for the Promotion of Religious Education, spends her life visiting schools nationally.

She says: "There may be a few schools who because of their multicultural pupils feel it is not appropriate to celebrate Christmas every year, but generally our experience is that the nativity play is not only widespread but is growing with a new lease of life and popularity. This is because more schools are looking at the story from a different angle and acting stories, which contain the same message but with a slightly different focus."

Typical of this trend was the performance this week by the infants (four to seven-year-olds) at St Michael's in Southfields, Putney, south-west London. The 135 children sang, acted, read and costumed their way through a story, which told of the bossy Christmas tree fairy who wouldn't let certain of last year's decorations be on the tree because they did not meet her idea of perfection. She even turned down the nativity

figures because they were so tattered and torn. When it was pointed out by the children that they were the most important part of the Christmas scene, and that the discarded decorations were also a valuable part of the Christmas picture, the fairy left the stage. But one of the shepherds brought her back.

David Kempster, the head of infants, says: "We did the Nativity the same way for 20 years and in the end not only do the children get a bit bored doing the same performance every year but so do the teachers. They have a lot of enthusiasm and ideas, and doing a different play around the same theme keeps it fresh and exciting."

For infants, the nativity play dominates the Christmas term with its rehearsals, costume fitting, learning of lines and the series of performances. For the teachers, bringing all the pieces together so they are "right on the night" can be something of a nightmare", as the acting head Connie Cooling says. Educationally and socially, the performance, with its reading, music, teamwork and confidence building aspects, is considered a central experience.

The head of music, Sheila Johnson, whose choirs have achieved an impressive local reputation, says: "Bringing everything together into the performance is rather special. And the children are far more



Bossy fairy Clare Morton says the characters are important

likely to remember the central message, the story, if they have acted it out rather than passively learnt it in class."

But what of the children? Clare Morton, six, was the impressive bossy fairy. She says: "I want everything to be perfect and I think that I am important, but it is the characters from the Nativity who are the most important. We have Christmas only because that is when Jesus was born."

Oliver Beaton, who is in the same class, felt sorry for those schools who didn't do a nativity play. "It's a treat for the mums and dads and also reminds us all of the meaning of Christmas." However, some of the younger ones had become a little confused. Genevieve Barratt, five, who played a fairy-light, says: "I don't think Mary and Joseph are very important, they come on only at the end and they do not sing or say anything." But her friend, George Steer, who played a wise king, says: "We do the play and have Christmas only because it is Jesus's birthday."

How to resist the copycat syndrome

Chris Barton advises against the temptations of plagiarism

In the brave new world of modular courses, Christmas is a crunch time: deadlines loom for the first piece of assessment that counts towards a degree. All over the country, lecturers will be warning their students not to ruin their lives by succumbing to the temptation of plagiarism.

At school, it was "copying off" your classmates rather than from published scholarship. There was one technique for tests and another for homework. In tests, guilty eyes would swivel to the next desk, where the received defence was to wrap a spare upper limb around the coveted opus, shooting back suspicious glances the while. For the virtuous, this was mere affectation, the better to demonstrate their own honesty. So, also for the thick, wishing to appear otherwise. Homework — "prep" at my school — might be shared with a friend, or extracted from fellow scholars of greater intellect, but lesser physical ability.

Now the homework of school days has become the continuous assessment of higher education. Demons at GCSE level as being done by parents, the HE version cheerfully allows students to pay an impecunious academic at (one hopes) another university to do the job.

As officer-in-charge Night School, I have been explaining the meaning of plagiary, a la Staffordshire Law School, to blank-faced acolytes. It is probably easier to explain the meaning of life. The purpose,

of course, is not so much to save them from dishonour as to cover my back, come the inevitable appeal. The school days analogy works OK for "copying", but what constitutes illicit reworkings of the published word is a bit trickier. While I was sitting in on a hearing the other day, and a colleague was substantiating the charge to a half-taking-it-in shattered young life, it seemed more sensible to advise them how not to plagiarise, or at least how not to be guilty of it. We can't all be Socrateses, making it up for ourselves.

An admiring, upfront recognition lets you rip off the rest of the work without fear of objection (at least, no fear of the grateful originator). So kick off with a big, scrupulously acknowledged quote in indented italics — "definitive source" — "seminal... only place to start". Do not merely slip it into the bibliography, although do not omit it either. Then segue into a lengthy abstract of the mark's work, occasionally salting it away in the footnotes an "and see op cit" (implying to the unsuspecting that it says something different from what you've said, but providing an alibi if challenged).

Finally, do the same with another scholar, but dismissively so. It can hardly be plagiarism if you're disagreeing with it.

● The writer is Professor of Family Law at Staffordshire University. No one ever plagiarises his work.

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BOXING

Golota presents tough challenge to establishment

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT, IN ATLANTIC CITY

ANDREW GOLOTA could upset the plans of the established heavyweights if he beats Riddick Bowe at the Convention Center here tomorrow. Golota was one of a younger group of heavyweights who was supposed to take over from the men at the top at present in two or three years' time, but he jumped ahead of the pack by surprising Bowe last July. He was on the point of knocking out the American in the seventh round of their contest at Madison Square Garden when he was disqualified for a low blow, his fourth of the night.

Now that he has sprung into prominence as a result of that performance, and the riot that immediately followed it — which, in turn, gave Golota worldwide publicity — everyone is asking if he can go all the way.

Quite apart from how he fares against Bowe, he looks the best of those coming through the heavyweight ranks and so, in time, he could become the first white world heavyweight champion since Gerrie Coetzee, of South Africa. The 28-year-old Pole may not be as clever and skilful as the young black heavyweights, but Golota's robust style more than compensates for technical deficiencies and equips him to challenge at the highest level.



'He could become the next white world heavyweight champion'

Golota sometimes looks like Drago, the Russian in *Rocky IV*, and sometimes (when he wears a baseball cap) reminds you of Joe Bugner, but he has more substance than the two of them put together and is the kind of tough customer most leading heavyweights would like to avoid — especially after what he did to Bowe, Danell Nicholson, the promising young star of Emanuel Steward, and Samson Po'Uha. Golota stopped Nicholson, but not before stunning him with a head-butt he could not control. Po'Uha, who is believed to have one of the hardest punches in the division, was sent to the floor five times, but not before Golota had bitten him in the neck.

In the riot that followed the Bowe bout, he had his head slashed by a mobile telephone. He made light of the 13 stitches that he received and, while he was being escorted to his hotel, he was still so full of devilment that he stole the accompanying police officer's truncheon from his belt.

Golota's matchmaker, Carl Moretti, said: "I had the feeling that he had been in a police wagon before. He jumped in and said: 'I got the window.' When we were walking to the hotel room, he says breaking into quick little smiles as he relates his escapades. When asked why he threw those low punches at Bowe, he replied with disarming candour: "Sometimes you have to protect yourself from the rabbit punches Bowe was landing."

However, his trainers, Lou Duva and Roger Bloodworth, are now concentrating on getting Golota to keep his punches up. He has been training with Derek Williams, the former Commonwealth heavyweight champion from south London, who said: "First week, he kept hitting me low. This is the fifth week. I think he is getting over it. He is very agile, strong and seems to have a good chin."

For all his rough-housing ways, Golota has a distinguished amateur record. Such heavy-handed tactics would not have been tolerated by the amateurs and he would not have picked up so many medals. Born in Warsaw, Golota started boxing at the age of 13. He won the Polish national title seven times, a silver medal in the world junior championships, a bronze and a gold in the European championship and a bronze in the Olympic Games at Seoul.

After marrying his wife, Mariola, he went to live in Chicago in 1990. He wanted to be a truck driver, but when he was training at a gym, he was noticed by the gym owner, Bob O'Donnell, who took him under his wing. O'Donnell helped him with an English tutor and guided him on his career. Golota has a record of 29 contests of which he has lost one, and 25 bouts have ended inside the distance.

O'Donnell took him to Duva at Main Events, New Jersey, and the promotion company and the veteran trainer set about smoothing out Golota's "straight up, European style". Duva said: "Golota is such a natural athlete. At 18, he could run 100 metres in 11sec. He is easy to train and has started to adapt to the pro style. He is a fanatical trainer and he won't stop until he gets it right."

First, though, Charleroi. If there was any doubt that



Suzie Ellis, the cox of Gull, the Cambridge Boat Race trial eight, had every reason to smile yesterday after her crew recorded a time of 16min 41sec, four seconds inside the record for the event (Mike Rosewell writes). Although they

began a length inside the official start, the time was a significant riposte to the Oxford trial eight, who performed commendably on Monday. Ellis guided her crew in a frantic contest for the best tide with the other trial boat, Innocence.

that was to prove decisive. She was, in the view of Guy Pooley, the umpire, "not quite disqualification material", although the bow side men in Innocence felt their rival's waves until Gull moved away from Barnes Bridge to the finish.

Brown stewing nicely for European title

David Powell finds Great Britain's leading cross-country runner happy with his role as favourite to take top honours this weekend

For the British international cross-country runner, the cooking instructions for a successful season are clear: low boil now, high boil later. Be fit, but not too fit, for the European championships in December; be lying come the world championships in March. It is impossible, the theory goes, to peak for both, and again for the track season.

Jon Brown's kitchen smells good. He is, he believes, likely to become Great Britain's first European champion in Charleroi, Belgium, on Sunday, and still have every chance of following the hors-d'oeuvres with a tasty main course. "I certainly want to improve on last season," Brown said, with reference to the coming world championships in Turin. Last season he finished twelfth, higher than any British man for seven years.

First, though, Charleroi. If there was any doubt that

Brown should be considered favourite to win after finishing as the leading European in the world championship last winter, there cannot be now after a result last weekend that suggests that the title is as good as his. He beat Paul Tergat, the world champion, from Kenya, to win the Llodio ten-kilometre cross country in Spain by 15sec.

Though a professional runner, Brown retains a spirit Corinthian in core, centred on wanting a top-six finish at the world championships. If he achieved that, it would bring him neither fame nor fortune. A more achievable route to recognition would be to win the European title, but any thought of peaking for Sunday and taking the world championship less seriously never

crossed his mind. "I am in nowhere near my best shape because I have done only four hard workouts since the Olympics," Brown, who was tenth in the 10,000 metres in Atlanta, said. "Beating Tergat



Brown: confidence high

just confirms that my training in November went well. If I set out with the specific intention of preparing for this race, I think my world cross-country preparations would suffer. For me, the world cross country means a lot more."

It is the hardest race of the year, but without the commercial clout of the track season. "I realise I could make the top half dozen and it would make no difference, people would not be interested," Brown said. "The world cross country is for my own personal satisfaction and nothing else."

"Even if I got a medal, so what? It does not have a high profile. It is a shame because it is the most difficult race to win, more than any Olympic gold." It brings together steepchairs, 5,000, 10,000 me-

tres and marathon runners. Brown, like David Bedford and Ian Stewart before him, speaks his mind. "Haphazard," was how he described Britain's team build-up for the world championships last year. "It is just hobby preparation," he said, critical that the British Athletic Federation (BAF) did little for distance runners. Last summer he accused fellow British runners of lacking commitment.

Brown, 25, rates his chances for Sunday as "fairly good" — I would be disappointed if I did not win. Ian Stewart, the last British man to win a senior international cross-country championship, took the view that "first is first and second is nowhere". To assist the reputation of British distance running in its present recovery, Brown believes that he must win. "It would have to be a win, otherwise it would not mean anything," he said. Just kitchen talk.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

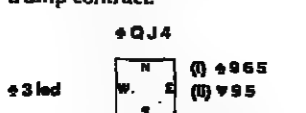
By ROBERT SHEEHAN
BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

In the refresher today, I want to explain an extension of the attitude signals that I have been discussing recently. First, an example: you are defending a spade contract and your partner leads the ace of hearts. (Remember, our lead conventions are to lead top of a sequence.) This is what you see:



As East, in both cases you play the nine, an encouraging signal. The logic is that in both cases you want your partner to go on with the suit when you have the doubler in it because you want your partner to cash out.

The reason I introduce this example is that it is a hybrid between length-showing and attitude signals. In general you indicate attitude on your partner's lead. However there are situations where you would give count. Again you are East, defending a No-trump contract:



Declarer puts up the queen. Clearly you would win the ace if you had it, so the high-card strength is not in doubt. Play the three, showing an even number. It may help West later in the hand.

Robert Sheehan writes on Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Anand's birthday

Viswanathan Anand, the Indian grandmaster, celebrated his 27th birthday in Las Palmas with a win against Vassily Ivanchuk. This brought the Indian level in joint first place with Garry Kasparov. Both players have two points out of three. In the third round Kasparov drew with Vladimir Kramnik, while Anatoly Karpov drew with Veselin Topalov and Ivanchuk have one each.

Anand's victory against Ivanchuk was a complicated clash in which the material advantage swung backwards and forwards. The position finally resolved itself into an endgame where Ivanchuk had three pawns in exchange for White's bishop. Discouraged by the turn of events, Ivanchuk chose to resign without being shown the technical process. Most players in his situation would have opted to play on.

White: Viswanathan Anand
Black: Vassily Ivanchuk
Ruy Lopez December 1996



White to play. This position is a variation from the game Alekhine — Capablanca, Buenos Aires 1927. Black has just captured a pawn on e4 and uncovered an attack against White's knight on h4. How should White respond?

Solution on page 42

12 Nd5 Bx4
13 Qh5 Q5
14 Rb4 Qx4
15 Qx4 N4
16 Nb6 Rb8
17 B4 N5
18 d5 Re8
19 K1 Re6
20 B2 Re4
21 Q4 R4
22 Q4 R4
23 Nc4 R4
24 Re4 Re4
25 Qx5 Re4
26 Qx5 Re4
27 Re4 Re4
28 Re4 Re4
29 Re4 Re4
30 Re4 Re4
31 Re4 Re4
32 Re4 Re4
33 Re4 Re4
34 Re4 Re4
35 Re4 Re4
36 Re4 Re4
37 Re4 Re4
38 Re4 Re4
39 Re4 Re4
40 Re4 Re4
41 Re4 Re4
42 Re4 Re4
43 Re4 Re4
44 Re4 Re4
45 Re4 Re4
46 Re4 Re4

Diagram of final position

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

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Solution on page 42

SPORTS LETTERS

Rowell must understand need for substitutions

From Mr E. S. Harvey

Sir, For many years tactical substitutions have occurred in many international sports including ice hockey, basketball, football, baseball, American football. Jack Rowell, the England rugby union coach, either does not appreciate the tactical benefits of substitution or misunderstands its rationale. Substitution allows the coach to use his own judgment as to whether to replace a tired or injured player, to alter and hopefully improve the style of play or even, by such intervention, to hope for divine providence to support his decision. It should and need not be left to the player to make such a decision: he won't go off unless he has to.

Mr Rowell's refusal to replace the England half backs during the second half of the match against the New Zealand Barbarians, and his post-match reasoning, clearly showed that, in his view, the effect on morale of any replaced player is more important than using able substitutes who may do better. The passing and kicking of

both half backs left much to be desired and two fresh pairs of legs might have made all the difference. The wise and astute New Zealand Barbarians coach clearly thought so, and look what happened in the last quarter of the match!

Mr Rowell must be asked to give more thought to the obvious benefit that sensible tactical substitution can provide and be big enough to ignore the disappointment of the replaced player, preferring to consider the best interest of the team and to use his squad more intelligently.

Yours sincerely,
E. S. HARVEY,
4 Gill Hill Lane,
Radlett,
Hertfordshire WD7 8DF.

From Mr J. Dodwell

Sir, May I suggest that the time has come for your newspaper to lead a campaign to change the ridiculous tap penalty rule which means that another penalty is awarded if the opposition have not withdrawn ten metres? We have now had to sit through the

Italy and New Zealand Barbarians games, where the defects in this rule have been very obvious.

I quite understand why the opposition should withdraw ten metres when a tap penalty is awarded, but they should be given time to do so. At the moment, the penalty can be taken immediately — before the opposition has had a chance to withdraw. If the side with the penalty rushes forward and the opposition resist the temptation to oppose within the first ten metres, then a try is very likely — which is why the opposition always does interfere and break the rules again.

I suggest that either:
a) the opposition have a fixed number of seconds during which to withdraw, following which the tap penalty can be taken; or
b) if the team awarded the penalty does not want to wait, the opposition can play on immediately.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN DODWELL,
6a Hagsdell Road,
Hertford,
Hertfordshire SG13 8AG.

Time to cry foul

From Mr J. Hind

Sir, In his report on Leeds United v Chelsea (December 2), Rob Hughes was so right in drawing attention to the disgusting amount of foul play in Premiership matches.

In recent televised games, players of standing and experience have tripped, kicked or elbowed any opponent near enough to attack. Players jostle and are jostled when corners are taken, others dive professionally in or into the penalty area and even the referees suffer the jostling.

We read that referees are to have a meeting to discuss the high number of red cards issued. The media targets the referees rather than the players who create the problems. Perhaps it is the Professional Footballers' Association which should be calling a meeting.

Yours faithfully,
JIM HIND,
8 Wickwood Court,
St Albans AL1 4QE.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211. They must include a daytime telephone number.

BBC coverage is still racing ahead

From Mr R. Grieve

Sir, I am writing with regard to your article about the quality of BBC Television's coverage of racing (December 2). Some 18 months ago I wrote to Peter O'Sullivan expressing my concern that the BBC had fallen behind Channel 4 after the loss of the Cheltenham Festival.

It had for some time hugely annoyed me that, during the BBC's shared coverage with other sports, it would switch to a race almost as the stalls opened and leave barely before the winning jockey had dismounted. Hardly worth the trouble and frustration for O'Sullivan and Julian Wilson.

However, I do think the shock of losing their 'jewel in the crown', the Cheltenham Festival, was a blessing in disguise for the BBC, as it seemed to spark it into life and herald coverage of the big

French classics and also evening races.

I find Channel 4 excellent in its quality of races covered, but it cannot touch the BBC with its tradition of going to the stables and providing beautiful scenery and music to match.

I find Jimmy Lindley's comments are always excellent and give us a jockey's view and show great knowledge of the thoroughbred racehorse. The Grand National coverage is also second to none.

Give me Julian Wilson and the stunning Sussex Downs on a glorious July day at Goodwood rather than the betting-obsessed ramblings of John McCrick.

Long live BBC racing!
Yours sincerely,
R. W. GRIEVE,
3 Brideshead Cottages,
Allendale,
Northumberland NE97 9EH.

Time to toast Croft's original talent

From Mr K. Phillips

Sir, R. D. B. Croft cannot be pleased to be described as an Englishman (December 4). Croft is a bilingual Welshman, the original and true Briton, a fact which explains why your report also observes that he is the only member of the English cricket team who is willing and able to adjust to an alien culture. Is it any wonder why we in Wales are more sympathetic to the idea of Brussels rather than a London-based government?

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH PHILLIPS,
7 Bryncoth Road,
Ammanford,
Dyfed SA18 1YP.

From Mr M. Diddams
Sir, It is gratifying to see that the moves made by the

MCC/TCB/ECB, or whatever they are calling themselves

last nearly three days. The Australian and West Indies teams must be quaking in their boots at the thought of having to play England in the future.

England lost by only seven wickets and made the game last nearly three days. The Australian and West Indies teams must be quaking in their boots at the thought of having to play England in the future.

Yours elated,
M. DIDDAMS,
21 Vincent Road,
Stungbourne,
Kent ME10 3DD.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

UMBLES
a. An ecclesiastical apology
b. Collywobblers
c. Entrails

HAPTODYSPHORIA
a. Bad breath
b. Dislike of touch
c. Baldness

FORMICATE
a. Coloured glass
b. To swarm
c. With pointed head

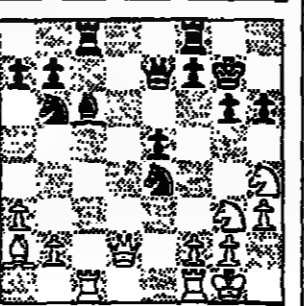
RESIPISCENCE
a. With a zestful taste
b. Wisdom
c. Repentance

Answers on page 42

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is a variation from the game Alekhine — Capablanca, Buenos Aires 1927. Black has just captured a pawn on e4 and uncovered an attack against White's knight on h4. How should White respond?



Solution on page 42

Mansell prepares for life in the fast lane

FROM OLIVER HOYT
IN BARCELONA

IT WAS all over quickly for Nigel Mansell yesterday, almost as if the second day of his test here was academic. Sixteen laps in the morning on a track still treacherous after a downpour at dawn, then into a Ford Scorpio parked behind the Jordan garage for a lunchtime dash to the airport with his wife, Rosamie. He carried the air of a man who had already made his mind up.

It is still far from certain that the 1992 world champion will be back in Formula One next season, but things, increasingly, are pointing that way. His wage demands will be substantial, but the feeling is that they will not be a stumbling block. Jordan's main sponsors, Benson and Hedges, could help to bankroll the move and Bernie Ecclestone, the sport's ringmaster, may also contribute.

The factor at the heart of Mansell's

decision, in fact, is likely to be his willingness to commit himself to a hectic 17-race season after 18 months of living life at a more leisurely pace, building up his golf course at Woodbury Park in Devon, and knocking down his handicap. Yesterday, before he left, he made it clear that he is craving a return to life in the fast lane.

"I don't think you ever lose the taste for it," Mansell said. "It does give you a buzz, but it frightens the hell out of you sometimes, too. It is the closest thing to the edge of life you can get, especially when it was wet like this morning and the car is difficult to drive."

The last two days have been a wonderful experience and it has given me a lot of food for thought. I have got no illusions about the commitment, the fact that you have to live, breathe, eat and sleep it, because I have been in the situation before. I know what it takes.



Mansell: considering options

"Over the next few days, we will go away and consider our future. Our future could include driving next year in one of several different formulas and it goes without saying that the Jordan team is one of those

options. There are a lot of things that are going to come into play."

Mansell was again outpaced by his prospective team-mate, Ralf Schumacher, yesterday and the younger brother of the double world champion offered a more sobering view of the Englishman's performance. Not a young man noted for his lack of confidence, Schumacher said he would have been dismayed if Mansell had gone quicker than him after 18 months away from the sport.

"I would have been very disappointed," he said. "In fact, I think I would have stopped Formula One if Nigel had been quicker than me. In principle, I think it would be good for us to have someone with his experience, but after such a long break, I am not sure if the time he had with Williams would be helpful to us now. Motor racing is not about money or your name, it is about what you do."

If Mansell returns, he will set his sights on becoming the leading

British driver next year. To achieve that, he will have to beat not only the world champion, Damon Hill, in his TWR Arrows-Yamaha, but also David Coulthard in his McLaren-Mercedes. Coulthard, one of the most affable of grand prix drivers, replaced Mansell at Williams at the start of 1995. Yesterday, in the paddock behind the garages, a quieter, moodier place than on the weekend of a race, he mulled over the pros and cons of Mansell's return.

"There is part of me that thinks: 'How many comebacks is he going to make?'" Coulthard said. "But Nigel has always been a hero of mine and it would be great for the sport to have him back. You can forget about the times he set over the last two days. If he is qualifying, he would be pulling extra tenths out all over the place. I'm sure he had a lot in reserve." Perhaps, when the talking is done and the decision is made, we will be allowed to find out.

Cricket looks ahead with end of TCCB

THE Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) wound itself up yesterday with what Tim Lamb, its cricket secretary, called "a tinge of sadness, but in a harmonious spirit, and with a mood of optimism". On January 1 Lamb becomes the chief executive of the English Cricket Board, which will be the future governing body of the first-class and recreational game in the United Kingdom.

At the meeting, the TCCB agreed that counties who rest Test players at the request of the chairman of selectors would be compensated by £500 a day — £2,500 for a four-day championship match and a Sunday league fixture — and that contracts for overseas players should not exceed two years, though they may roll over.

Cash in short supply

SWIMMING: Competitors could have been forgiven for feeling short-changed as the first heats of the inaugural European short-course championships got underway in Rostock, Germany last night (Craig Lord writes). While prize-money of almost £250,000 had been billed for "top performers in all 38 events" by the European Swimming League, the governing body yesterday announced that that figure was a maximum limit to be distributed not among all winners, but in parcels of about £2,000 to those who break European short-course records over the next three days.

Gerg strikes first

SKIING: Hilde Gerg, of Germany, achieved her season's goal in the first World Cup ski race of the 1996-97 European circuit with an impressive super-giant slalom victory over her countrywoman, Katja Seizinger, in Val d'Isère yesterday. "It was my main objective this season to win a second World Cup victory at last," she said after beating Seizinger by 0.39sec. "I had been waiting for that moment for nearly two years."

Price of citizenship

GOLF: Zimbabwean authorities are reported to have ordered Nick Price to stop flying the country's flag until his citizenship is formalised. Dumiso Dabengwa, the Home Affairs minister, was quoted by the Financial Gazette newspaper as saying Price, who holds a British passport and has been playing golf claiming to represent Zimbabwe, should stop doing so. Born in South Africa and raised in Zimbabwe, Price renounced Zimbabwean citizenship in 1984.

Hall still on a high

BADMINTON: Darren Hall, of England, continued his winning run in the qualifying round of the World Cup championship in Jakarta yesterday. Hall overcame Fung Permadi, of Taiwan, 15-12, 4-15, 15-10. However, there were defeats for the doubles pairings of Chris Hunt and Simon Archer and Nick Ponting and Joanne Goode.

Rhinos charging on

RUGBY LEAGUE: Leeds Rhinos continued their rebuilding yesterday by signing Jamie Mathou, the North Queensland Cowboys forward. The capture of Mathou, who is 6ft 1in and 16½st, came 24 hours after the Huddersley club announced the arrival of the Sheffield trio of Ryan Sheridan, Dean Lawford and Anthony Farrell.

SAILING

Dalton launches Whitbread bid

FROM EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT
IN MONTE CARLO

GRANT DALTON, of New Zealand, who won the Max class in the last Whitbread Round the World Race, threw down the gauntlet for the 1997 race here yesterday, announcing a well-planned and well-funded campaign. This time the Auckland-based sailor has a budget thought to be about \$9 million (£5.5 million).

This is the third consecutive Whitbread campaign for Merit, a subsidiary of Philip Morris, and it is being run under the burgee of the Yacht Club de Monaco, where the launch took place. This came complete with satellite links to Auckland, where the syndicate's two boats are being built, and to Bruce Farr, in Annapolis, Maryland, who designed them.

Merit's first two campaigns were skipped by the experienced Pierre-Edouard de Villiers, of Switzerland. This time they have gone for Dalton, who will be competing in his fifth consecutive race but sailing for the first time on a Whitbread 60.

His crew includes Kevin Shoebridge, who is overseeing the building in Auckland, Mike Quilter, as navigator, and Guido Maisto, of Italy, who skipped the W60, Brookfield, in the last race, finishing sixth. Despite the Monaco link and the promotional emphasis on Italy, the crew will be mainly from New Zealand and the early trials will be held there.

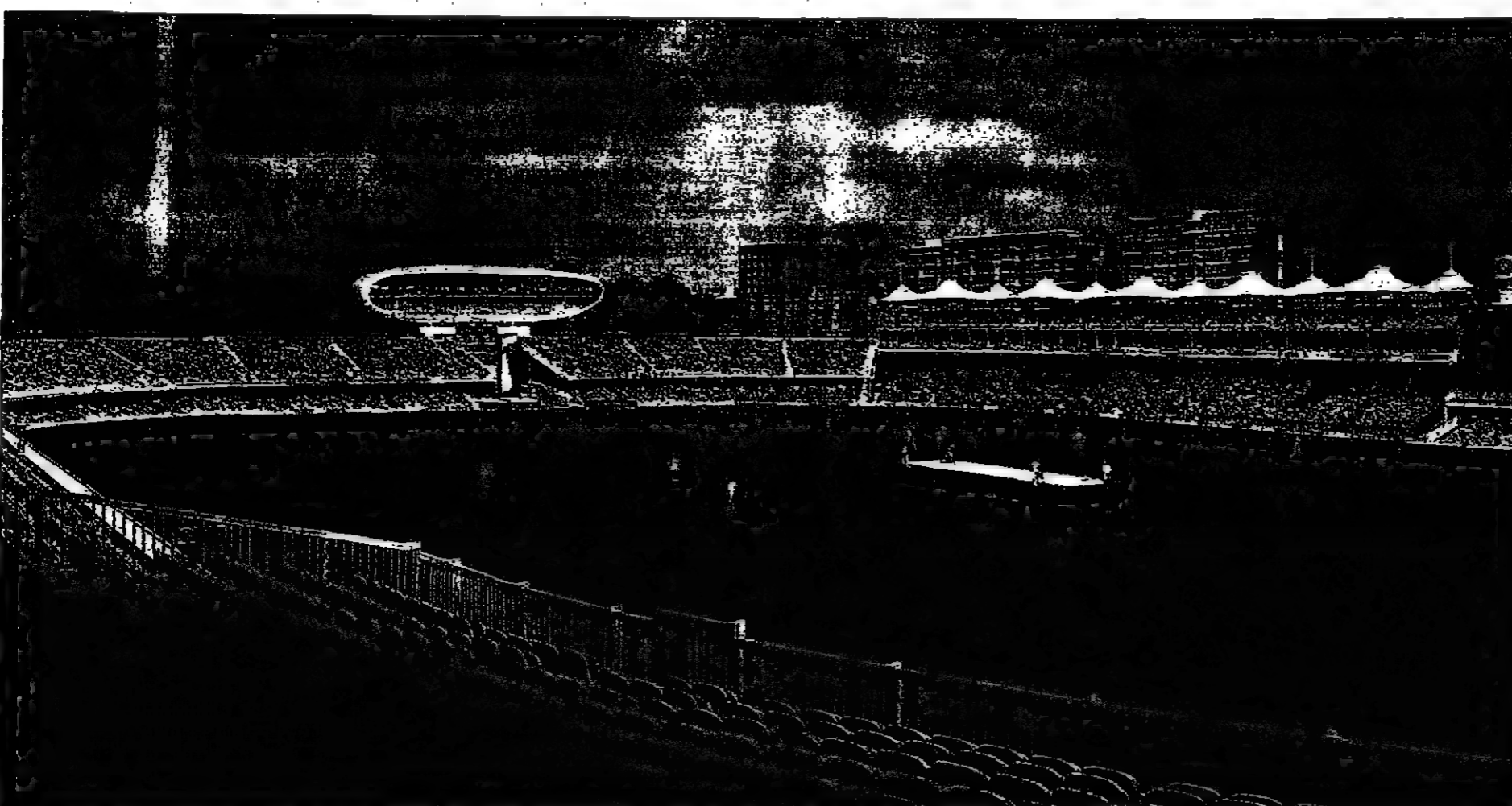
Dalton named Lawrie Smith, of Britain, who is expected finally to be able to announce his Silk Cut-sponsored campaign on Monday, and the partnership of Chris Dickson and Dennis Conner as two of his leading rivals.

Although he is well ahead of Smith on the construction and planning side, Dalton was reluctant to rule him or anyone else out. "It's too early to try to pick winners," he said. "The evenness of the design rule means you haven't got people who have already lost the race. In the past, at this stage, 12 of the 14 boats would have already lost."

Dalton, who is among nine clients of Farr's in the race, said he was very happy with the design and is keeping an open mind about which of the two hulls will be chosen. "It's going to be quite a tough call," he said, adding that intensive two-hour testing would start at the end of February to determine which would be chosen for the September race.

Dalton has a wealth of experience in this event but said that he had a lot to learn about W60s. The emphasis is on a solid campaign. "You lose the Whitbread by trying to be too clever," he said. "We are trying to do everything one per cent better than everyone else — not one thing 100 per cent better."

MCC members must broaden their horizons, Jack Bailey says



An artist's impression of how the new elliptically-shaped structure will alter the Lord's skyline while providing optimum viewing facilities and resources for the media

Time for a leap of faith at Lord's

ON Monday, the special general meeting of MCC, called to discuss and approve plans for the installation of a new media centre above and behind the Compton and Edrich stands at the Nursery End of Lord's, will provide as stern a test of the members' belief in the wisdom of the committee as there has been for some time. It is almost inevitable that this should be so.

The past decade has seen enough change to make even the likes of Kerry Packer rub their eyes. Not all of it has been to the obvious and immediate benefit of the members themselves and the latest venture will raise a number of reasonable doubts in the minds of the rank and file.

As owners of Lord's cricket ground they have already been asked to swallow some pretty rich fare: the building of the new Mound Stand, new offices for the English Cricket Board, the tearing down and replacement of the symbolic Grand Stand — financed, in part, by the sale of life memberships — and the steady unshowering of hospitality areas, not to mention commercial advertising on the field of play.

Now the chief has wheeled in his piece de resistance. The committee commend the media centre on the

basis that it will complete the updating of facilities at Lord's by extending to the media "exemplary facilities, consistent with those which are already available, or will soon be, to everyone else at Lord's ground."

Another plank in the committee's argument, that "the provision of a new media centre at Lord's would put the club in an excellent and unrivalled position to hold the World Cup final in 1999 . . .", is doubtless true. It could be argued, however, that while outdated and in a far from ideal position, the present facilities could be augmented by temporary additions. If this were done, the chances of the 1999 final being staged other than at Lord's would still be remote in the extreme.

What is chiefly at issue here is whether Lord's cricket ground, as the flagship of world Test match venues, should provide the best media facilities available in the modern age, facilities that will cope with the galloping demands imposed, particularly by television and radio, upon which the game relies to bring itself before an instant audience of many millions. At the same time, the lot of equally important working journalists, both in the written and photo-

graphic senses, would be greatly improved.

In order to achieve this, the MCC committee is proposing "the first all-aluminium building in the world, with the skin of the building forming an integral part of the structural system."

It will provide clear and uninterrupted views of the pitch, with room for 250 broadcasters and journalists, and scope for much else besides. It is

'The centre is proof of the exciting, cultural change on the face of Lord's'

envisioned that the centre will be used for a number of other purposes in both winter and summer.

The design, while futuristic, would do less to impair views of those wonderful Lord's trees than would a more traditional one and, when taken within the broad sweep of the new Mound and Grand stands, would not stick out like a sore thumb, as has been suggested. Already the project has been received favourably by the Royal Fine Arts Commission, the

Westminster City Council planners and even the St John's Wood Society.

With the 1999 World Cup in mind, Roger Knight, the MCC secretary, says that agreement in principle has already been reached with the English Cricket Board that, with the new centre in place, Lord's would be the venue for the final and at least one other match.

Plans for financing this vast undertaking are already at an advanced stage. In return for the building being known as the NatWest Media Centre, the use of a couple of hospitality boxes and advertising at the Nursery End, NatWest will pay £2.6 million during the life of a six-year sponsorship. They will also provide a loan on favourable terms from which construction costs can be met. It is confidently foreseen that specialised equipment will come at no cost to the club.

All this leaves MCC prepared to provide up to £1 million from its own resources — yet another contribution to the game it has nurtured over the 210 years of its existence. If all goes as expected, the call on reserves would, however, be minimal.

Almost without exception, the members of MCC have followed the

advice of their committee and often they have been right to do so. Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie, the newly installed president, has no doubt of the worthiness of the project. "The NatWest Media Centre is proof of the new, exciting, cultural change on the face of Lord's cricket ground. It blends perfectly with the new Grand Stand and the Mound Stand, while the historic and traditional image of the ground is maintained by the pavilion," he said.

Certainly the odds are that in ten years, opponents of the futuristic design will wonder what all the fuss was about. Initially, the new Mound Stand had its critics: most are eager converts now.

All that is needed is a small leap of faith on the part of the membership. The knowledge that "who dares wins", and that this one final step will confirm Lord's as the centre of world cricket well into the foreseeable future, should be enough.

There is a bonus. The true cricketing media, who have been consulted at every stage, will be firmly on their side.

Jack Bailey was secretary of MCC and the International Cricket Conference from 1974-1987.

India extend unbeaten run

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

INDIA extended their unbeaten home run in Test series and completed their first series triumph over South Africa with a 280-run victory on the final day of the third Test in Kanpur yesterday. India have not lost a series at home since their 1986-87 defeat by Pakistan.

Any lingering doubts about the outcome vanished when South Africa, resuming on 127 for five in pursuit of 461, lost three early wickets, including both overnight batsmen, Brian McMillan and Dave Richardson, without addition to their scores.

Sumit Joshi, who finished with three for 66, had McMil-

lan brilliantly caught by the substitute, Vangipurappu Laoman, for 13 off the fourth ball of the morning before Javagal Srinath trapped Richardson leg-before for five. Pat Symcox struck Anil Kumble for a six over mid-off but then gave Joshi a return catch after making 11.

Venkatesh Prasad bowled Parne de Villiers for two and Srinath had Paul Adams caught by Mohammed Azharuddin in the slips for one to end the innings on 180, seven balls after lunch, and leave Lance Klusener on 34, an innings containing five fours.

Azharuddin, dismissed as captain earlier this year, was

named man of the match and man of the series. His unbeaten 163 in the second innings here, his sixteenth century in 75 Tests, put the match out of South Africa's reach.

India now play a return three-Test series in South Africa during a seven-week tour that begins on December 19. Sachin Tendulkar, who has won three of the four Tests since taking over the captaincy from Azharuddin, said: "It's a great feeling to beat one of the best teams in the world. We now look forward to beating them in South Africa."

Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, attributed his team's poor performance in Kanpur to his batsmen's failings rather than tricks played by the pitch.

"Those who were willing to stay got runs," Cronje said. "We have not got used to low-bounce wickets and have not mastered the art of scoring big hundreds on turning wickets. Our batsmen like pitches where the ball comes on to the bat and our bowlers prefer wickets where the ball has more carry."

Gatting a guiding force

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN BRISBANE

MIKE GATTING'S influence in guiding the precocious talent of Owais Shah has already been considerable as the batsman's England A coach and Middlesex captain. But if Gatting succeeds in becoming an England selector, he would be in the perfect position to ensure Shah's development continues unhindered by a restrictive youth policy.

Gatting was able to turn his mind to these issues as he and the rest of the A party suffered

a frustrating third day of their tour match with Queensland here after overnight rain and bad light restricted play to 85 minutes.

Queensland, resuming on 154 for four, 76 runs adrift of the touring team's first-innings total, reached 195 for five at the close, with Glen Chapple, the Lancashire fast bowler, claiming the only wicket, that of Terry Cassell.

Gatting has confirmed his willingness to join the selec-

tion panel alongside Graham Gooch, the favourite to become Raymond Illingworth's successor as chairman, and David Graveney, the A team manager, providing he can successfully combine his playing career with the position.

Should discussions with Gooch, his long-time friend, who finished as the leading English batsman last season in the dual role, provide Gatting with the satisfactory answers to his queries, he is sure to campaign on behalf of Shah, 18, to prevent him from taking a needless step backwards.

As the rules stand, Shah would be prevented from playing for Middlesex next season if he were selected for the England Under-19 side, as he surely would be after an impressive A tour to Australia.

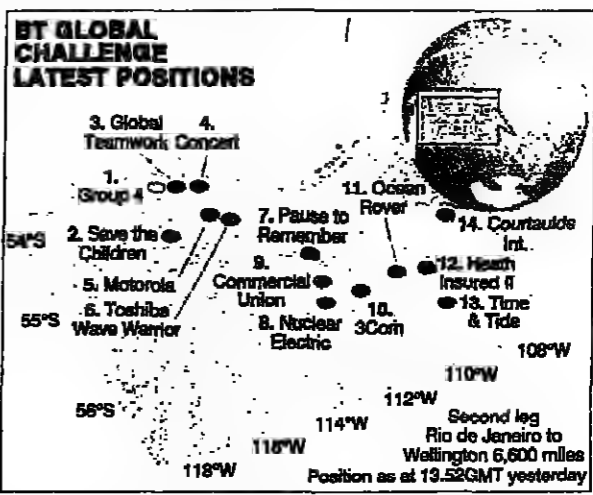
"If they made it a rule then so be it, but I'd like to think they might regard him as a special case to try to push his cricket forward," Gatting said. "Common sense says he would learn more from county cricket than going back to the under-19s."



Gatting: concerned

SCOREBOARD	
ENGLAND A: First Innings 230 (M A Butcher 72, B N Croux 6 for 70)	
QUEENSLAND: First Innings	
T J Dixon c Vaughan b White	62
J J Barry b G Gohm	28
J P Maher c Hogg b White	10
S G Law c Chapple b Hollocke	19
M P Most not out	25
J L Cassell c Hogg b Chapple	22
T W A Scoccione not out	10
Extras (No 4, No 10)	14
Total (5 wickets)	195
S A Priestwood, B N Croux, P W Jackson and S A Muller to bat.	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-62, 2-81, 3-130, 4-132, 5-176	
BOWLING: Headley 6-1-30-0, Chapple 6-4-6-51, Barry 6-1-16-1, Gohm 6-3-25-0, White 14-4-31-2, Hollocke 6-5-20-1, Cullen 10-2-17-0	
Umpires: P D Parker and J F Torpy	

SCOREBOARD FROM KANPUR	
INDIA: First Innings 287 (S R Tendulkar 81, V V Ramesh 57, P R Adams 6-50). Second Innings 400 for 7 (cric; M Azharuddin 163 not out, R S Dey 56)	
SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings 177 (M Klusener 4-71)	
Second Innings	
A C Hudson a sub b Kumble	31
G Kruger b Srinath	7
H V Rhodes b Prasad	1
D J Cullen not out	1
D J Cullen c Tendulkar b Joshi	18
M McMillan c Joshi b Joshi	18
D J Richardson b Joshi	6
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-21, 2-38, 3-50, 4-97, 5-108, 6-127, 7-138, 8-167, 9-176	
BOWLING: Srinath 10-1-39-3, Prasad 11-3-25-2, Kumble 24-11-27-1, Joshi 13-8-10-0, Joshi 29-9-66-5	
Umpires: D R Shepherd (England) and M Venkatesh Rao (India)	



DISTANCE TO WELLINGTON: 1, Group 4 3,318; 2, Save The Children 3,244; 3, 2,357; 5, Motorola 3,465; 6, Toshiba Wave Warrior 3,370; 7, Puma 3,465; 8, 3,446; 9, Nuclear Electric 3,450; 10, Commercial Union 3,456; 11, Ocean Rover 3,508; 12, Health Insured 3,520; 13, Time & Tide 3,530; 14, Courtouls International 3,564

Gazza gets stuck on the bottom line

LYNNE TRUSS



Kicking and Screaming

When Rangers were 2-1 down to Hibernian on Saturday, I started getting worried. This wasn't meant to happen. Those nice Hibernians in their green and white weren't supposed to beat Rangers, unless perhaps as a kind of rain-of-frogs portent for Armageddon. Yet they deserved to be winning. Hibs' excellent Darren Jackson was the man of the match; while Paul Gascoigne was looking fat and scant of breath. "Are the Gers just tired?" I asked the man on my left in the press box. "Perhaps their trip to Auxerre in mid-week has, you know, shagged them out a bit?"

Together we watched the exciting action on the pitch in thoughtful silence, both of us perhaps remembering that Gascoigne hadn't been to Auxerre; he'd been to the premiere of *101 Dalmatians* instead (bless him). Even if I was correct, of course, it was the wrong thing to say; nobody makes allowances in sport. Behind us, rabid Rangers supporters yelled non-stop in raw, unprintable language, to the effect "Come on chaps, move your bottoms." Finally, "Uh-huh," the man replied. But he did it in that non-committal Scottish way that can mean anything from "That's true," to "Well, shut up then, I'm watching."

It's an odd sensation being out of your depth in Scottish football, because you know that if you suddenly stood up and said "Oh, that's right of that," Scottish football would only come up to your knees. "What's the point of the same teams all endlessly playing each other until the crack of doom?" is a question with heightened significance in a league of such tight dimensions. Scottish football may be tired of the "small pond" label,



Gascoigne, in a rare moment of animation during one of his quieter afternoons, uses his strength to protect the ball from the attentions of Dow

but its premier division can't help but strike the outsider as tiny-weeny. The ten teams make such a short, cute list in print that you want to pat it on the head and buy it sweets. But looking around at 48,000 dangerously worked-up Scots at Ibrox on Saturday, one had to accept that football still makes huge numbers of Protestant Glaswegians very happy. Which brings us to the other big problem — Rangers' relentless supremacy. Because even with the early setbacks on Saturday, Rangers were always destined to win the match, and the most pressing question north of the border is not whether the big fish will ever be found belly-up in the small pond, but whether it can maintain its jaws impression for nine years on the trot.

Well, I don't know much about sport, but in terms of entertainment, the prospect of

that is rubbish. Rangers should obviously stand down, or something. They should offer to tie Andy Gorm's feet to a goalpost with elastic. All this winning can't be good for anybody. Leaving aside the effect on the players' egos (which doesn't bear thinking about), Rangers ought surely to consider the effect on dramatic suspense. Being a fan of Scottish football must be like watching those awful TV60 awards every week of your life. "Yes, and the winner is (again) ... Morecambe and Wise!"

Ostensibly, I was at Ibrox to watch Gascoigne, but I kept forgetting about him because he was rarely in the thick of things. He set up one goal brilliantly for McCoist, but on the whole played with more commitment on Tuesday night against Dundee United (a match Rangers lost, fittingly, by scoring a goal for the other

side). On Saturday, Gazza refused to dazzle, presumably because he didn't feel like it. Whenever he lost the ball he momentarily quit playing. Perhaps things were not happy at home. Or perhaps, after the excitement of *101 Dalmatians*, real life was too cruel a let-down.

Either way, I have only just come to realise that the saving grace for footballers is that every Saturday they have to run around in shorts and be shouted at. And while it doesn't make them humble, it surely offers a corrective to the insane world of suits and hair gel and white stretch limousines. For the mired-up Gazza, I have no doubt the 90-minute interludes on the pitch are the only bits of his life that make any sense to him. No wonder he runs the gamut of emotions

when he's out there; it's the only time he knows who he is.

The big infuriating Gazza emotion, of course, is *ennui*. "Don't act bored, you're playing a football match, move your bottom!" is what you want to tell him. But he just trots along on those funny thin legs, his square face a blank, his centre of gravity high up, somewhere inside his rib-cage. I noticed this capacity for ill-timed trances in Euro 96. Despite desperate urgings, he just won't move his bottom unless it suddenly occurs to him to do so.

He ambled through some matches in Euro 96 like an amnesiac, taking free kicks as though they were beneath his notice, flogging corners without apology. But then, of course, he would wake from his sleep ("Where am I?") and transport his bottom with great effect. Rangers are the

perfect side for him, since they win anyway. Presumably he can be a rock in one game, flashes of lightning in another, chewing-gum in a third. Brian Laudrup and Ally McCoist will play on; the strength of purpose doesn't change.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, amid the noise and passion, the man in the press box indicated another blond in blue, Erik Bo Andersen. "See that man?" he said, nudging me. I nodded excitedly. At last, a secret of Scottish football! "Really a heating engineer," he confided. "Not many people know that. Can't play football at all, just a mix-up." Andersen promptly made the worst unforced error I have ever seen — standing a few yards in front of an open goal, he knocked the ball wide. "I see what you mean," I said, wide-eyed. "But he's a very good plumber," he said.

FOOTBALL: FIRST DIVISION CLUB PROMISES HIGH RETURN TO INVESTORS

Birmingham ready to share

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE FA Carling Premiership is where the big money is to be found in football and would-be investors in Birmingham City were promised yesterday that they would share in the windfall if the club were to be promoted to the game's highest, and richest, league.

Announcing plans to launch a £5 million share issue on the Alternative Investment Market, with the money generated to be used to buy new players and redevelop the St Andrews stadium, Birmingham said that investors would double

their money in three months if the Nationwide League first division club won promotion. Although the club's co-owners, David Sullivan and the brothers, Ralph and David Gold, have already pumped £8 million into City, they will continue to back the club alongside the new scheme.

David Gold said yesterday: "This is a golden opportunity. If you invest today in Manchester United, you would get relatively small growth because they are up there and have done it all. Equally, if you invest in a small club, there is no real

future. Birmingham City is one of those rare club-businesses which is on the brink of exploding. If people buy shares today, then by getting into the Premier League they will double their money."

Southampton have won approval to build a £35 million, 25,000-capacity all-seater stadium on the outskirts of the city. Hampshire County Council has granted the FA Carling Premiership club a 125-year lease on a 73-acre site at Stoneham, near the M27 motorway. The club is hoping to play its first match in the new stadium before 2000.

Hartson tempers approach

BY ROSS KEMPSON

JOHN HARTSON, the Wales striker, has played a leading role in Arsenal's rise to the top of the FA Carling Premiership this season, yet he freely admits he has got to clean up his act on the disciplinary front if he is to continue his impressive progress.

Hartson, 21, has collected nine bookings this season, one in a pre-season match and eight in his first 13 league and cup games. A three-match suspension followed. He was also substituted by Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, during the 7-1 defeat against Holland in Eindhoven last month after an off-the-ball incident involving Phillip Cocu, the Dutch forward.

However, after a heart-to-heart chat with Tony Adams, the Arsenal captain, Hartson is now channelling his aggression in a more acceptable form. He has made six appearances without a caution since he spoke with Adams and will need to show similar restraint when Wales play Turkey in a World Cup qualifying match at the National Stadium in Cardiff tomorrow.

"The incident in Holland was pure frustration," Hartson said yesterday. "We were 5-1 down and I just lashed out. I was trying to show a bit of passion and it came out the wrong way; obviously, I regret it now."

Vinnie Jones, another often tempestuous character, captained Wales for the first time in Eindhoven but will revert to vice-captain tomorrow with the return of Barry Horne from injury. "It's one of the most important games I've been involved in," he said. "We've simply got to win."

Jones is equally concerned about his future at Wimbledon. His contract expires at the end of the season and negotiations with Sam Hammam, the Wimbledon owner, have not gone according to plan. "Sam's got this pay-as-you-go scenario, but I don't want that," Jones said.

Mountain or molehill?

United States of Anger. Radio 4, 9.45am.

Gavin Ester, the BBC's man in North America, is not normally guilty of making mountains out of molehills, but I can't help feeling he has constructed something of a hill of beans this morning. In New Hampshire, after chatting with two voters — there are 800,000 in the state — he asserts that the American dream is dead or on its last legs. His evidence? One breadwinner has lost his job and can't get another. Then a wife tells him she lost her faith in Bill Clinton when he changed from being anti-abortion to pro-abortion. However, Ester produces some better-founded evidence of national disillusionment when he lists some political jesters in America's theatre of the absurd. They include the man who had hoped to move into the White House when the present tenant was forced to move out.

Musical Encounters. Radio 3, 10.00am.

The golden thread that has linked this week's editions of *Musical Encounters* is the voice of Cecilia Bartoli, the Italian mezzo. She is one of the wonders of the age. You can hear her this morning, round about 10.55, singing Haydn's cantata *Arianna a Naxos*. It has been said of Bartoli that her singing is a self-portrait in sound. This implies that, personally, she is the quintessence of joy, and when you hear her sing Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* or practically anything from her considerable Rossini repertoire — she is a Rossini singer *par excellence* — it is impossible not to believe it.

Peter Daville

RADIO 1

7.00am Chris Evans 9.00 12.00 Lisa Tannen, includes at 12.30pm-12.45 Newsbeat and at 1.15 The Hot 2.00 Nicky Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier, includes at 5.30-5.45 Newsbeat and at 6.30 The Continuous Dance Mix 7.00 Essential Selection, with Pete Tong 10.00 One in the Jungle 12.00 Radio Rap Show 3.00am Annie Nightingale 5.00 Chris

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake up to Wogan 8.30 Ken Bruce 11.30 Jimmy Young 13.00pm Debbie Thompson 3.00 Ed Stewart 6.05 John Dunn 7.00 Worldbeat 7.30 New quiz series with Johnnie Walker 7.50 Friday Night is Music Night. From the Hippodrome in Golders Green. Robin Boyle introduces the BBC Concert Orchestra 8.45 Armistice Day (1918) 9.00 Listen to the Band 10.00 Sheridan Morley 12.00am Chris

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports, incl at 5.45 Wake Up to Money 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 12.00 Midday with Mark 2.00pm Ruocco on Five 4.00 Newsbeat, incl at 5.45 Entertainment News 7.00 News Extra, with David McNeil, incl Sports Bulletin 7.25 Parkinson on Spot 8.30 Friday Sport, with Robin Bailey 10.05 Paper Talk, with Jay Rayner and Brian Alexander 11.00 Night Extra, with David McNeil includes at 11.15 The Financial World Tonight 12.00am After Hours 2.05 Up All Night

TALK RADIO

5.00am Early Breakfast 7.00 Paul Ross 8.00 Scott Cranham 12.00 Anne Robinson 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Drapers, with Peter Dinkley 7.00 Muz Dee's Sportszone 10.30 Mike Allen 11.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, Elgar (English Variations); Tchaikovsky (Waltz and Polonaise); Building a Library; Hummel (Piano Concerto in G, Op. 129); Vivaldi (Overture No 6 in B flat); Goldschmidt (Minuit à Saville, La Claudemine); Boccherini (String Quartet in G)

8.50 An Advent Calendar 9.50 Morning Collection: Chantrel (Overture); Anacrost; Dvorak (Silent Woods); Janacek (Mlada); Rachmaninov (Suite No 2) 10.00 Musical Encounters, See Choice

12.00 Composer of the Week: Robert Simpson 1.00 News: British Lullabyland Concerts. Continuing the series of concerts from St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol. Anya Alexeev, piano, Haydn (Piano Sonata in G, H 516); Ravel (Menuet sur la Norme d'Haydn); Schubert (Piano Sonata in G minor, D658)

2.00 Preoccupations. A series in which leading musicians talk about matters close to their heart. Today, conductor Nicholas McGegan describes his magical garden in Berkeley, California

2.05 Monteverdi. Su pastorelli vizzoso, Zefiro torna, Glay de May and Martin Kleierman, tenors; Jozsef Gregor, bass; Capella Saveria under Nicholas McGegan

2.15 Music Restored. Chris de Souza introduces the last of four programmes recorded at the Royal Academy of Music, London, to mark the 45th anniversary of the death of

RADIO 4

5.55 Shipping (LW) 6.00 News Briefing incl Weather 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today 6.55 Weather

9.00 News 9.05 Desert Island Discs. Fertility specialist Professor Robert Winston (r) 9.45 United States of Anger. See Choice (2/5)

10.00 News: In the Grip of the Gloaming (FM). The last of the programmes paying homage to women's magazines, with Liz Lochhead (1/4)

10.00 An Act of Worship (LW) 10.15 On This Day (LW) 10.30 Woman's Hour 11.30 The Natural History Programme

12.00pm News: You and Yours. Mark Whitaker presents reports on consumer and social affairs

12.25 The Food Programme. Food intolerances and allergies — are they on the increase? 12.55 Weather 1.00 The World at One, with Nicky Clarke

1.40 The Archers (r) 1.55 Shipping 2.00 News: Classic Series: Cyrano de Bergerac. Edmond Rostand's classic play, translated by Anthony Burgess. With Alan Norton, Emma Fielding and Jonathan Cullen (1/2) 3.00 News: The Afternoon Shift, with Laurie Taylor 4.00 News: Lullaby Land: Tim Marlow investigates the ancient art of colouring of sculpture 4.45 Short Story: Goodbye Africa, by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Read by Jack Klaff

WORLD SERVICE

All times in GMT. News on the hour 5.00am Europe Today 6.30 Europe Today 7.30 AM The World 7.30 Heritage 8.10 Words of Faith 8.15 Music Review 8.45 Record Progress 9.05 World Business Report 9.15 Focus on Faith 9.45 Sport 10.30 BBC English 10.45 On the Spot 11.30 Meridian Books 12.05pm Business 12.15 Britain Today 12.30 Science in Action 2.05 Outlook 2.30 Multitrack 3.05 Sport 3.15 Record Progress 3.30 Music Review 4.15 World Today 4.30 BBC English 4.45 Britain Today 5.30 World Business Report 5.45 Sport 5.50 Focus on Faith 7.01 Outlook 7.25 Words of Faith 7.30 Multitrack 9.05 World Business Report 9.15 Britain Today 9.30 People and Politics 10.30 World Today 10.45 On the Spot 11.30 Inside's Guide 11.25 Book Choice 11.30 Multitrack 12.30am Seven Days 12.45 Britain Today 1.30 Outlook 1.55 Words of Faith 2.30 Science in Action 3.15 Sport 3.30 Meridian 4.30 Jazz Now and Then 4.45 Seven Days

CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00 Mike Read 6.00 Henry Kelly 12.00 Susan Smith 2.00am Concerto 3.00 The Double Horn Concerto in E flat major 3.00a James Crichton 6.00a Newsnight 6.30a Sonata. Handel (String Sonata No 6 in D major) 7.00a The World at One 7.10a Second Meridian (Hobbes Overture Op 26, Fingel's Cave); Strauss (The Lustful Knight); Mozart (Piano and Harp Concerto in C, K299); Beethoven (Symphony No 4 in E minor) 10.00a Michael Mappin 1.00am Sally Patterson

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Russ 'n' Jon's Breakfast Experience 10.00 Graham Dene 11.00pm Jeremy Clark 4.00am Nicky 1.00pm Paul Coyle (FM) / Robin Banks (AM) 10.00 Alan Freeman 12.00am Mark Forster 2.00am Howard Pearce

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 38

UMBLES

(c) The entrails and guts of an animal, especially those of a deer, but extended to cover any entrails that are typically consumed as food, such as kidneys, liver and sweetbreads. Every schoolchild knows this to be the origin of the expression "to eat humble pie", this being the food reserved at the lowest end of the table away from the roast. *Umbles* are often the result of eating umbles.

HAPTODYSPHORIA

(b) The shuddering unpleasant feeling experienced by some people when they touch certain surfaces, such as suede, or silk or snakeskin.

FORMICATE

(d) To swarm like ants. *Formica* is the Latin for an ant. "Headmaster, I thought you ought to know. Classes 11, 111 and Remove are formicating all over the quadrangle."

RESIPISCENCE

(c) Recognising the error (or errors) of one's ways, seeing reason once again. Repentance and possibly even remorse. An uncommon human sentiment. "I assure you that we are all looking forward to your eventual resipiscence, Colin."

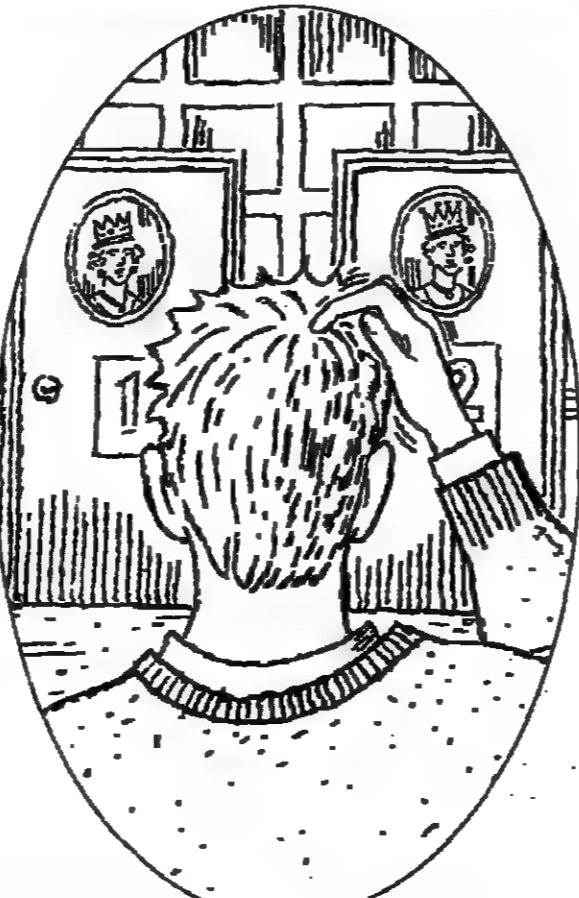
SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Nf5! 2 g5 3 Nxf5 4 Kb3 5 Qxb6 6 Kd5 4 g4 checkmate

Ruddles County Riddles.

No. 13. Pub Challenge.

For Peter Barrowbury it of the doors, lay the prize, been instructed to lie, but was a dream come true. He had a voucher for unlimited Peter did not know which. won the 1996 Hertfordshire access to the love of his life. Peter stepped forward, Pub Quiz Championship after Ruddles County. asked one of the men a six grueling rounds. The challenge was set. question, and upon hearing But his victory was by He did not know behind his answer confidently so means final. He had yet which door (they were strode through door 1 to to claim the prize. marked 1 and 2) lay which claim his voucher. He was placed in the prize. Beside each door Peter is of course too bar of the Queen's Head Pub stood a barman to help him busy to tell as how he is Westcott. There were decide which door to choose. worked out which door to two doors, each leading to However, the catch was choose. Do you know how different rooms. Behind one that one of the barmen had he worked it out?



Steamed, spit-roasted and finally soused

Whether the Turkish bath has become a compulsory subject yet at British film schools, I'm not sure. But if it has, it should. It's virtually impossible to make a bad documentary about communal bathing, which must be encouraging if you're at the beginning of a career behind the camera. On the other hand, it's virtually impossible to make an original film about the subject: a suitable cinematic challenge for the ambitious.

With scarcely a week going by without somebody ringing to say "we've got this stunning film set in a municipal bathhouse..." I've become something of an expert in the genre. Basically there are two sorts - if its men's night, it will be lots of stark naked chaps explaining why there is absolutely nothing strange about slapping a stranger with a huge bit of disgusting looking sponge. And if it's the women's turn... you get

last night's *Women at Play: Turkish Delight* (Channel 4) - lots of artfully draped white towels (they're not silly) and lots of chat about how nice it is to get away from husbands, boyfriends, children and jobs.

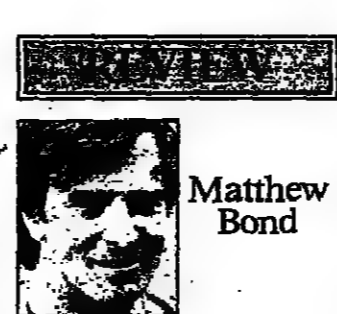
Noemie Mendelle's effort may have scored modestly on the originality front, but it was sufficiently beautiful for all involved to take encouragement from the project. Ten out of ten, then, for artistic impression.

But scoring any points for originality at all is an achievement when it comes to the soggy-fly-on-the-tilling documentary - and Mendelle scored some. True, she may have been pushing it a little by using speeded-up film to suggest that leafy Harrogate was the epicentre of urban stress, but those of us who live in more seriously metropolitan areas appreciated the effort.

A clever mix of soft-focus and

steam protected her subjects' modesty, while playful editing teasingly promised more but rarely delivered. Goodness, we chaps are easily led. One sequence in particular stuck in the memory. Through a double protective layer of misted-up glass and clouds of steam, the camera tracked the length of something the trained eye would just about recognise as female and naked. But, at the very second the focus hardened to see the matter beyond doubt, the magazine that was previously being read was placed over an area of more strategic importance.

For those who know their Oxford folklore, it's a manoeuvre once executed - in reverse - by Maurice Bowra when caught off-guard at Parsons Pleasure, the university's infamous nude bathing spot. "I don't know how people recognise you old chap..." For those who don't,



Matthew Bond

it was a wonderful bit of choreography, in keeping with the rest of this prettily executed film.

Having relaxed us, Channel 4 then set out to feed us with TV Dinners. An evening of complete indulgence stretched pleasantly ahead. But what I am thinking of, was Channel 4. There was a price to be paid. But more of *Dispatches* in a moment.

First, TV Dinners, which is

turning into a hugely enjoyable series, helped by the restrained backseat role that Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, its presenter, is content to play. He happily lets the amateur cooks get on with their elaborate preparations, politely offering now and then to do some of the nastier jobs. Cutting fish? Prising open the teeth of a freshly killed pig? Nothing is too unpleasant for F-W, as those who recall his antics in skinning an eel from an earlier series can attest. "First, take a six-inch nail..."

The first of last night's cooks was Fred Carr, stockbroker and enthusiastic spit-roaster. Carr thought that spit-roasting appealed to the 18th-century gentleman in him. But by the end of the marathon preparations, it was 20th-century frailties that were to the fore. Whether it was making the stuffing (a level bucketful will suffice), inserting the custom-made spit (not a job for the squeamish, but

perfect for F-W) or sitting under the hot Cotswold sun for six hours turning it, who knows? But Carr found himself in the position of so many cooks when they have laboured too long and too hard. His guests were wailing it down, but he had a headache and wasn't hungry: "I'm drinking Coca-Cola and not eating very much pork..."

Rather more trenchant spirit was demonstrated by Peter Snow, an artist whose birthday supper was cooked (and photographed by reference) by his daughter and fellow brush-wielder, Selma. She took him on a day trip to Boulogne, where she bought fresh sea-bream and he sneaked off for Calvados and cake. Back home, supper was the fish, followed by prune and Armagnac tart. "Is father's verdict?" The Armagnac sounds nice," Selma, no doubt wise to her father's mores (not to mention his much mores)

poured two huge measures of Calvados. "Is that enough, do you think?" mused her father.

Quite enough, if last night's *Dispatches* (Channel 4) is to be believed, which laid an early claim to this year's Bah, Humbug Award with an unimpeachable look at alcohol abuse. The programme raised a number of sobering points (and in the process did nothing for the already much-maligned image of Glasgow) but got itself - and me - thoroughly confused by attempting to pin all alcohol-related problems on to the Portman Group, a drinks industry-funded pressure group. The group, as theorepore Sarah Spiller showed, had many difficult questions to answer, but really could not be held responsible for all alcoholic ills. The only answer, according to the experts, is something scary called whole population control. Here's to Christmas in the last chance saloon, then.

- 8.00am BBC BREAKFAST (80655)**
9.00 BBC BREAKFAST NEWS (140023)
9.00 BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA (1168058)
9.20 STYLE CHALLENGE (4041077)
9.45 KILROY Topical discussion series (504228)
10.30 CAN'T COOK, WON'T COOK With Ainsley Harriott and two reluctant cooks (28888)
11.00 NEWS (1), regional news and weather (2327110) **11.05 The Really Useful Show** Consumer advice (2380223) **11.45 Smilie's People** (1389545)
12.00 NEWS (1), regional news and weather (5826987) **12.05pm** Alas Smith and Jones. Lighthearted western adventures (1) (251674) **12.55 The Weather Show** (5525145)
1.00 NEWS (1) and weather (43110) **1.30 Regional News and Weather** (3782874)
1.40 NEIGHBOURS (1) (2348110) **2.00 Call My Bluff** Word game with Bob Holness, Sami Tolkovic and Alan Coran (5313)
2.30 Peter Seabrook's Gardening Week Seasonal advice for the green-fingered (787) **3.00 Inconito** (5348)
3.30 ANTS IN YOUR PAINTS (502058) **3.50 The Family News (1)** (591053) **3.55 Dr Mr Barker (2004482)** **4.10 The Best of the Best** (1) (180222) **4.35 Grand Hill (1)** (785145) **5.00 Newsworld (1)** (5253708) **5.10 Blue Peter (1)** (5482313)
5.35 NEIGHBOURS (1) (109416)
6.00 NEWS (1) and weather (418)
6.30 REGIONAL NEWS MAGAZINES (808)
7.00 THIS IS YOUR LIFE Michael Apple emotionally mugs another unsuspecting worthy (1) (7329)
7.30 TOP OF THE POPS (1) (762)
8.00 ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES Another chance to see this classic episode from the comedy series starring David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst. Rodney and Albert are concerned about the imminent birth of "son of Dick" (1) (235581)
8.50 MORE ANTIQUARY ROADSHOW **9.00 NEWS (1)**, regional news and weather (3394)
9.30 HETTY WAINTROPP INVESTIGATES Patricia Routledge as a 60-year-old private detective. This week she is asked to find the mayor's daughter - without alerting the police (1) (419533)
10.25 FILM: Any Which Way You Can (1980) A sequel to *Any Which Way You Can*, the striking Clint Eastwood as a prizefighting trainer who attracts the attention of a mobster looking for a challenger for his fighter. Directed by Suddhy Van Horn (1) (338752) **WALESE** In Wales: 10.55 **FILM: Any Which Way You Can 12.45pm** **FILM: The People Under the Stairs 2.25pm**
12.10pm FILM: The People Under the Stairs (1991) A horror movie starring Brandon Adams and Everett McGill. Directed by Wes Craven (1) (555849)
1.50 WEATHER (5219827)

- 8.00am OPEN UNIVERSITY: Rural India - a Vulnerable Life (7880042)** **8.25 Developing World (7732077)** **8.50 The Developing World (889138)** **9.15 See Hear Breakfast News (2112226)** **9.30 Yaky Duck (5833110)** **9.50 Smart (5344225)** **9.15 Charlie Chalk (705719)** **9.35 The Record (5043222)** **9.50 The Complete Guide To The 20th Century (1748222)** **9.10 My Father, My Country (5388228)** **10.00 Playdays (2411077)** **10.25 The Champions (8175752)** **11.10 The Phil Sivers Show (2228400)** **11.40 Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars (1382581)** **12.00 Operation Survival (73890)** **12.30pm World Lunch (32591)** **1.00 Charlie Chalk (59734874)** **1.15 The Oprah Winfrey Show (1819110)**
1.35 MIRROR MIRROR (2974743)
2.15 SPORT ON FRIDAY With Helen Rolston. Includes golf, skiing and news of England's cricket tour of Zimbabwe, with Graham Gooch (943110)
3.55 NEWS (1) (5917418) **4.00 Today's the Day (1)** (481) **4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (805)**
5.00 ESTHER: Born in Unusual Places (8435) **5.30 GOING, GOING, GONE (145)** **5.50 THE MISTERS (14)** (501435)
6.25 UFO Colonel Foster is tried for espionage (1) (294732)

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- For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday**
- SKY 1**
7.00am Live Connection (403955) **7.20 1451-1515 (1355)** **7.30 The Simpsons (540139)** **8.10 Hotel (565538)** **8.30 Another World (532358)** **8.45 Oprah Winfrey (701951)** **9.00 The Simpsons (540139)** **9.30 The Simpsons (540139)** **10.00 The Simpsons (540139)** **10.30 The Simpsons (540139)** **11.00 The Simpsons (540139)** **11.30 The Simpsons (540139)** **12.00 L.A.P.D. (74578)** **12.30am Real TV (27172)** **1.00am Real TV (27172)**
SKY 2
7.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574) **8.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **8.30am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **9.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **9.30am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **10.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **10.30am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **11.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **11.30am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **12.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **12.30am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)** **1.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (145574)**
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6.00am A Christmas Romance (1904) **6.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **7.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **7.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **8.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **8.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **9.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **9.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **10.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **10.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **11.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **11.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **12.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **12.30am A Christmas Romance (1904)** **1.00am A Christmas Romance (1904)**
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7.00am Sports Centre (3



CRICKET 39

Lord's faces up to shape of things to come

SPORT

FRIDAY DECEMBER 13 1996

KICKING & SCREAMING 42

Missing in action: Gazza in Glasgow



Divid
face
home

Leonard takes over leadership

New England put on hold by captain's injury

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE path towards a new future for English rugby is clearly not destined to be a smooth one. Having decided at the start of the season that Phil de Glanville should succeed Will Carling as England captain, Jack Rowell, the coach, was yesterday forced to announce de Glanville's withdrawal from the international against Argentina at Twickenham tomorrow.

The Bath centre strained a thigh during the game against the New Zealand Barbarians on November 30 and, though it mended sufficiently to allow him to play in the Courage Clubs Championship match against Harlequins last weekend, the injury flared up again in training at Bisham Abbey on Wednesday and has failed to respond to treatment. His misfortune allows the "old firm" of Carling and Jeremy Guscott, who have played together in 43 internationals, to take over midfield operations again.

Guscott, surprisingly moved on the left wing last Monday, moves inward and the vacancy is filled by Tony Underwood, who resumes his international career after an 18-month hiatus. The captaincy, however, does not return to Carling but alights on the

broad shoulders of Jason Leonard, the former carpenter from Barking. Leonard, 28, was named as pack leader and vice-captain this season and the decision to make him captain was, in Rowell's view, a natural extension. Were he to leave the field, however, Carling would lead the side.

Leonard, who has propped the England scrum in 50 internationals, the first of

Allan Bateman has been recalled by Wales for the game against South Africa in Cardiff on Sunday — six years after winning the last of his four caps. The Richmond centre takes over from Gareth Thomas, who has not recovered from a mouth injury.

them against Argentina in 1990, regards himself as merely a stopgap for de Glanville. "It's a great honour, but my role as vice-captain has just gone on a stage for one match," he said. "Phil is the captain of the side and I need to carry on what he has started this season. We have a side that's quite young, that shows a willingness to play open rugby, that wants to make the

game theirs, and it's very exciting.

It will be a popular honour for rugby's epitome of Essex man. He has established a worldwide reputation as a powerful scrummager, on either side, and he has a cheerful, down-to-earth approach. "There are 14 other class guys on the field and my role is to make sure they are prepared for what will face them," Leonard said. "My approach is very calm and collected."

Some observers offered the opinion that, judged on his form against the New Zealanders, de Glanville did not merit a place in the England team. However, that view was made to look suspect by the quality of de Glanville's performance for his club against Harlequins six days ago.

He will remain with the squad this weekend and, fitness permitting, will resume his role against Scotland on February 1, when England open their defence of the five nations' championship.

The latest change comes on top of those forced by concussion to Adedayo Adebayo on the left wing and Tim Stimpson at full back. "It's a setback but what England do have is a squad of players, which you need," Rowell said. "The way the international season is developing, there will be times when you have successive games and people on the bench have to feel they are interchangeable."

"I'm pleased that Tony Underwood has emerged from a fallow season and it gives Jerry Guscott the chance to show off his wares. The chemistry in the midfield could be very interesting. Will has done immeasurably well in handling the psychology of becoming a player after being captain for so long and Jerry will be trying his damndest."

Underwood, 27, will win his 21st cap but his first since the World Cup semi-final against New Zealand in June last year. Since then he has recovered from a leg injury and settled into second-division rugby with Newcastle; he played at Twickenham last Saturday, for the Barbarians against Australia, and his presence, together with that of Guscott, will increase the pace in the back division.

Should Mike Catt not recover from a blow on the chest, the midfield could change further with the introduction of Alex King. Paul Grayson, the stand-off half throughout last season, was brought in as cover yesterday but Catt is expected to demonstrate his fitness at training this morning.

Stransky signs, page 40
Gerald Davies, page 40



Knight, who made a century in England's first innings, falls leg-before to Olunga for eight in their second at the Athletic Club yesterday

Atherton enjoys moving experience

FROM SIMON WILDER IN BULAWAYO

BULAWAYO (third day of four): Matebeleland, with all second-innings wickets in hand, need 372 runs to beat England.

IN THE course of five days, life on England's tour of Zimbabwe has undergone a dramatic change, from one large banana skin to a bowl of cherries. Rival theories as to how this has come about are that either everyone has struck form at the same time, or England are being lured into a false sense of security in another stage of the phoney war that traditionally precedes a Test series. The truth probably lies somewhere in between.

Certainly the pieces of the jigsaw appear to be falling

into place here at the Athletic Club. Yesterday, as England manoeuvred themselves into a strong position on a rain-shortened third day of their match against Matebeleland, the two frontline batsmen short of runs, Michael Atherton and Graham Thorpe, scored their first half-centuries of the tour to help set up an England declaration. Darren Gough had earlier taken the one remaining Matebeleland wicket to finish with figures of six for 64.

David Lloyd, the England coach, and Atherton himself were, naturally, delighted. "Everything is coming together," Lloyd said. "All our batsmen are in the runs, we have a fast bowler with six wickets and a spinner (Tufnell) with five. Our spinners, Tufnell and Croft are bowling well in tandem. Caddick is starting to

fire. We are building on our game all the time."

Atherton's form was the most heartening of the day. He started like a man in need of runs, searching for the middle of the bat and enjoying slices of luck, which have been long overdue. The benefits of the injections he received last week to ease his severe back pain became apparent as he

India triumph 39

moved freely into line and unleashed some vintage strokes. He batted through 36 overs for 55 before dragging a ball from Vaghmaria, the left-arm spinner, into the hands of mid-on and was clearly still feeling so chipper four hours later that he jogged the two miles back to the hotel in pouring rain after a thunderstorm halted play for the day at 4pm.

Atherton's place at the wicket was taken by Thorpe, who swiftly enjoyed a let-off, James missing a stumping chance. Thorpe needed no second invitation and got his head down to play himself back into touch against the undemanding challenges posed by the two spinners. One over from Vaghmaria, in which Hussain had already pulled a six, saw him cut two balls to the boundary and drive a third for four. He later brought up his fifty with a six against the same bowler.

Thorpe's 65 occupied 101 balls and once he was out England declared on 230 for five — Stewart and Hussain having made forties — and left Matebeleland to score an improbable 377 to win. They had survived four overs when the day was brought to its premature end but England will be confident of completing a timely victory today, 48 hours before the first one-day international.

England must, though, remind themselves who they have been outplaying this week. Matebeleland are a weak side. Their batsmen show limited technique based on a desire to drive and to cut — Atherton wisely posted a fly-slip for Gough and Caddick late in the day — and betray a dislike of the short ball. Their bowling, which effectively means their seam bowling, is

only strong on paper. Olunga and Mbanga are promising but raw and Streak, the man who also spearheads Zimbabwe's attack, did not bowl yesterday. England should ask themselves why.

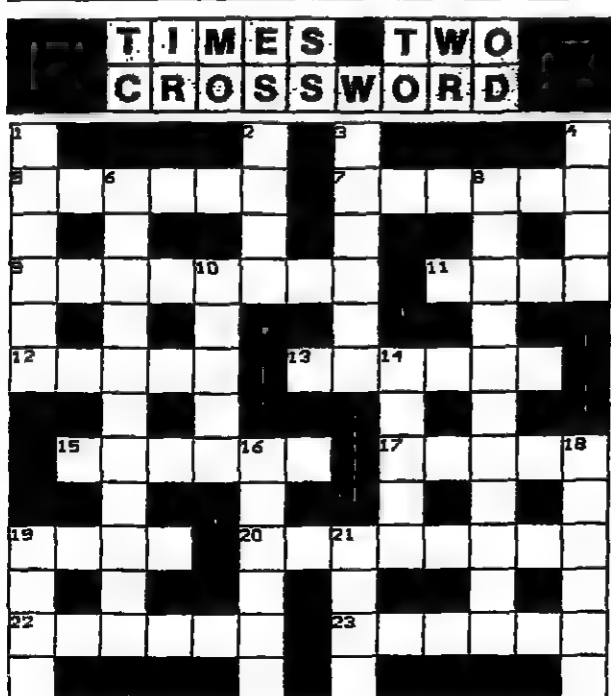
It is possible that Streak, who has played little cricket since recovering from a groin strain and posed few threats in the first innings here, is not match-fit in which case England really are in a strong position going into the Test.

It may be, though, that Zimbabwe are deliberately keeping him under wraps, which would explain why he remained on the field yesterday despite supposedly being prevented from bowling by a nagging knee injury.

England will discover the truth next week, but either way, they should expect life to be tougher from now on.



Guscott aims to stoop to conquer at centre tomorrow



No 964

ACROSS

- 5 Sumptuously entertain (6)
- 7 Food basket; obstruct (6)
- 9 Ancient Indian holy language (8)
- 11 Publicise; stopper (4)
- 12 Wound wound; flying geese (5)
- 13 Symbolic representation (6)
- 15 Pay no attention to (6)
- 17 Nearby; pub (5)
- 19 Move fast, with a buzz (4)
- 20 Bridge for water (8)
- 22 Remove from statute book (6)
- 23 John —, chemist; Hugh —, Chancellor (14) (5)

DOWN

- 1 Crucial, unstable period (6)
- 2 Loved; expensive (4)
- 3 Regular beat (6)
- 4 Stupefy with chemicals (4)
- 6 Team of activists (6,5)
- 8 Hay-fever incidence indicator (6,5)
- 10 Japanese wrestling (5)
- 14 Lower part of hull; nonsense (5)
- 16 In fact; surely not? (6)
- 18 Long prayer sequence (6)
- 19 Nothing (4)
- 21 Pakistani language (4)

The solution to 963 will be published Wednesday, December 18

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Stevenage's hopes fall to ground

Russell Kempson finds an old problem has reopened old wounds in the FA Cup

ONE of the most acrimonious disputes of the last football season involved Stevenage Borough, the Vauxhall Conference champions, and the Football League. Stevenage claimed their rightful place in what is now the Nationwide League third division, but the league declined them the opportunity, refusing to budge from its stance that the club's Broadhall Way ground was not up to scratch.

The matter rumbled on throughout the season and eventually ended up in the High Court, where, not surprisingly, the league emerged victorious. Though Stevenage continued to moan about the injustice of it all, they were sent back to the Conference, their dreams shattered.

Broadhall Way has since been improved to meet league regulations and yet, at the club's first subsequent opportunity to provide proof positive of its readiness to join the big boys, they have been found sadly wanting. Stevenage's FA Cup first-round tie against Birmingham City, on January 4, has been switched to St Andrew's.

Local police have advised the club that the ground — which is only the width of a £10 note

away from finally gaining league approval — is not yet ready to accept the travelling Birmingham hordes, especially those who arrive without tickets. On this advice, ratified by the Football Association (FA), the tie was switched.

"Our primary concern is public safety and we had grave reservations about the game going ahead," Inspector Chris Moulder, of Hertfordshire

police, said yesterday. "We were worried by the ground's suitability for a match of this magnitude at this time." Fears included the segregation of rival supporters, minor building work still underway on site and the lack of a completed police control room.

Many a professional side has fallen at such an intimidating non-league venue, but if Stevenage have lost that

Ronaldo pips Shearer

ALAN SHEARER, the Newcastle United forward, has been pipped by the Barcelona striker, Ronaldo, to one of the first important awards of the year. Ronaldo, 20, the Brazilian sensation, has been named World Soccer magazine's world player of the year, polling 16.56 per cent of readers' votes, ahead of Shearer, who was second with 14.42 per cent, and AC Milan's Liberia international, George Weah, in third.

The trio will also share top billing when Fifa, the sport's

world governing body, officially announces its player of the year in Lisbon on January 20. They are the leading contenders for an honour decided by the votes of 120 national team coaches.

Bobby Robson, the Barcelona manager and former England coach, is in no doubt as to the merits of his player. "You can go anywhere you like in the world and you won't find a player like Ronaldo," he said. "Can anybody anywhere show me a better player? He's simply sensational."

Any thoughts of rebellion among the fans, robbed of the prospect of great deeds on the pitch, should be eased by the announcement that Stevenage are running ten coaches to Birmingham free of charge. A grand gesture by the club... and there should still be plenty of change left over from its big pay day.

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Divided US capital faces ruin after 'home rule' failure

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE US capital is heading for financial collapse unless the federal Government urgently takes over responsibility for the city's medical, care and roads, the Washington DC financial control board said yesterday.

A 46-page strategic plan, published yesterday, is a scathing indictment of the district's 22-year experiment in "home rule" — running itself as the District of Columbia, independent of any of the states.

For those two decades the most powerful Government in the world has been unable to halt the deterioration of its capital. Drinking water is declared unsafe several times a year; schools lack textbooks; main streets are strewn with potholes; three feet deep, covered with metal sheets but never repaired; gunshots are heard within a few blocks of the Senate.

Washington is one of America's most racially divided cities, with white professionals crowded into the northeastern quadrant of its 69 square miles. Millions of tourists visit the city's renowned monuments and museums.

Yet the capital falls more black men than graduates from its high school every year, and black babies die at rates higher than in any other American city.

Residents regularly attack Mayor Barry, the Mayor, and his administration for

inefficiency and incompetence. Mr Barry was re-elected as Mayor in 1994, even though he had presided for 12 years over the city's decline, and had been filmed in 1990 by FBI cameras smoking crack in a motel with a model. He was jailed for six months.

But the city's reliance on local taxes for most of its income is also at the heart of the problem. Three quarters of its population is black and many residents are on welfare, meaning that tax revenues are low and benefits bills are high. White professionals tend to move to the affluent suburbs, where taxes are much lower.

In contrast, British cities receive much of their income from central government and only part from local taxes. That method of spreading the tax burden has helped to

prevent the emergence of American-style ghettos in Britain.

Washington's problems are about to grow worse, as under the new welfare laws signed by President Clinton it must find jobs for thousands of people now receiving welfare. However, most of the city's jobs are in government, inappropriate for many long-term welfare recipients.

According to Washington DC's board, however much the district improves efficiency the financial crisis will continue unless the city is subsumed within a well-off state. But the neighbouring states, Maryland and Virginia, are fiercely opposed to such suggestions, as they would be saddled with Washington's problems.

The alternative, as the board recommends, is for the federal Government to take over the city's \$400 million (£250 million) annual bill for Medicaid — the medical assistance programme for the poor — together with the main prison, the city's mental health programme, road and bridge maintenance and a hefty slice of the \$5 billion shortfall in retirement payments for teachers, firefighters, policemen and judges.

Mr Barry has made clear that he supports this plan. However, Congress has traditionally been reluctant to commit federal funds to the capital, for fear of political opposition in the states.



Brian Dahley with Taylor, his healthy 18-month-old son, and wife Heather at home in Midland, Michigan. As a four-month foetus, Taylor made medical history when he had a bone marrow transplant to correct an inherited weakness in his immune system

Luxury shops hail the comeback of American excess

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

AMERICAN shopkeepers are reporting a surge in "big spending" and are detecting a return to the free-wheeling self-gratification of the mid-1980s.

Independent statistics are showing an 18 per cent rise last year in spending on "luxury" goods. One analyst yesterday predicted that it could be just the start of a top-end spending boom which will spread across the Atlantic.

The self-indulgence sector blossomed far more than mundane items, such as food, clothing and electronic goods, which rose by 5 per cent. The figures, reported by the New York-based *Tactical Retail Monitor*, stated that Americans spent more than \$35 billion in the past 12 months on non-essential "reward" items.

Isaac Lagnado, publisher of the newsletter, said yesterday: "The Eighties are back, for sure. The trend is now well established and it is OK to be flamboyant again."

He pointed to the success of items such as \$250 stainless steel toasters, which are capable of toasting only two slices of bread at a time. At the New York branch of Prada, the upmarket outfitter, there is a three-month waiting list for \$400 men's flannel trousers, while Tiffany, the Fifth Avenue jeweller, can barely keep up with sales of a new and distinctly uncheap line of trinkets (prices run up to \$19,000 per item).

Mr Lagnado said that the "luxury boomlet" showed a marked change from last year,

when US shopkeepers had an unusually slow festive season. "Last Christmas was the third worst for a generation," said Mr Lagnado.

Bob Wharen, managing director of the Americas branch of Rolls-Royce, said: "Sales of motor cars for the last year are up by 18 per cent, following a similar rise last year. We are seeing more optimism from customers, with people ready to grant themselves permission to reward themselves. There are also many more inquiries."

All 50 models of a new, limited-edition Jaguar sold out within eight days for \$75,000 apiece from a Neiman Marcus Christmas catalogue and motor trade statistics for the top end of the car market showed a 12 per cent growth in sales. Explanations for the sudden boom range from the bullishness of Wall Street, which has seen a prolonged and record high, to the fact that the baby-boom generation is reaching the age of financial freedom from school fees and mortgages. There may also be a desire to escape the greyness of recent years.

At Fendi, the newest hot fashion store on Fifth Avenue, clusters of women wait to inspect the latest fur coats, undeterred by prices which typically reach \$40,000. Plastic carrier bags are more than \$500. Patrick Philippe has a waiting list for its \$44,500 watches.

Mr Lagnado said that figures indicated a likely rise of 30 per cent in the coming year for luxury goods.

Clinton's choice for CIA chief in trouble

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

LESS than a week after he announced his new CIA Director, President Clinton was forced to defend Anthony Lake yesterday over allegations of breaking government rules amid growing Republican opposition to his confirmation as head of American intelligence.

Mr Lake, the National Security Adviser, is being investigated by the Justice Department in Washington over the belated sale of shares in his personal portfolio, which White House lawyers said, almost four years ago, could compromise his judgement as a top foreign policy official.

Signalling the prospect of conflict during future confirmation hearings in Congress, Arlen Specter, a Republican senator and chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, also said he had serious reservations about Mr Lake's nomination to head the CIA.

Mr Specter expressed concern that, at a time when Congress was involved in highly charged debate over a United Nations arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia, Mr Lake failed to tell Capitol Hill about a covert American decision to allow Iranian arms into Bosnia-Herzegovina. Hawks within the CIA have also questioned Mr Lake's liberal outlook: he resigned from the Nixon Administration in protest at the invasion of Cambodia.

Asked about Mr Lake, President Clinton leapt to his defence yesterday. "The counsel's office and others reviewed the facts of this case and we believe that it is not a disqualification [for confirmation]," Mr Clinton said.

Couple's au pair kept as a slave

BY QUENTIN LETTS

A COUPLE from Florida admitted holding their au pair girl in slavery and torturing her to keep quiet and work.

An what civil rights groups claim was a far from isolated case, Kishia Mahant, 42, and his wife, Shashi Gobindram, 34, both from India, pleaded guilty to harboring Francesca Ekka, an illegal alien, and forcing her into "involuntary servitude". She worked 16-hour days for little or no pay, and was brutally treated.

Miss Ekka, 23, who arrived from India to look after the couple's two children, was so frightened that she would not leave their house in prosperous Miami Lakes, prosecutors said. Eventually she summoned the courage to telephone the police, saying "come help me, please".

Mahant and his wife admitted that they took away the au pair's passport, burnt her address book and stole any mail she received. They burnt her with an iron, threatened to tie her up with a dog's lead and twisted her ears until they bled. When she was found by police, the au pair had welts and swellings on her face and body.

She was punished for any domestic accidents and was regularly driven in to the countryside at night and abandoned for several hours, "in what seemed like a jungle", as retribution for perceived misdeeds. After a few hours the Mahants would return to collect her.

Mahant, who owns an import-export business, will be sentenced in March with his wife. They face up to five years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 (£151,500).

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Kenya crippled by 'brutal and corrupt' judiciary

FROM SAM KILEY IN NAIROBI

SEXUAL torture, rape, beatings, mob killings and massive corruption have become hallmarks of Kenya's judicial system over the past half decade, according to a damning report on the former British colony by the London-based African Rights.

The human rights organisation says in a book by Lucy Hannan published yesterday that "Kenyan justice is corrupt and abusive; its machinery and ethos have collapsed".

Until the 1990s, Kenya's courts were seen by opposition figures and government officials as the one part of the administrative system that was beyond excessive political influence and free of corruption. But Ms Hannan's book, *Kenya, Shadow of Justice*, shatters that illusion and gives a warning of violence and chaos in the run-up to next year's general elections.

"Rather than turning to formal mechanisms for justice, the average man and woman live in fear of it — from the routine violence of the police, through the corruption

and inefficiency of the courts, to the congested prisons. The profound crisis of faith in the justice system is, increasingly, leading people to use alternatives — often resorting to the horrifying violence of mob justice," Ms Hannan says.

No one who has watched the inexorable decline in personal security, and standards of services in Nairobi, the

her teenage daughter. Four policemen held her down while a female officer sexually abused her.

She was told she would be shot if she did not sign a confession saying that she had been hiding firearms in her house. She refused, was charged, released and rearrested. For the next two years she was forced to appear in

African National Union now ranks as one of the most venal and corrupt on the continent. Last year, 1,798 prisoners died in filthy jails, ten times more than a decade before.

Even hospitals are no longer considered a sanctuary. Ms Hannan details several cases in which former patients are held by force as indentured labour in sanatoriums after failing to pay medical bills.

Already reeling from a plunge in tourist numbers from 830,000 in 1994 to 600,000 last year (including about 40,000 Britons), Kenya's tour operators are braced for another bad year.

Western diplomats, led by the British, have been impressed with Kenya's efforts at fiscal probity, which have reined in inflation to less than 7 per cent and maintained a growth rate of 3.5 per cent or more. Earlier this year, the West agreed to release \$800 million in balance of payments support, frozen since 1990, in an attempt to force President Moi down the road to multiparty democracy.

6 The crisis of faith is leading people to use alternatives — often resorting to the violence of mob justice

capital, could disagree with Ms Hannan. Mob killings are an almost daily occurrence.

Jacqueline Wangui Ngunja, wife of G. G. Njengi — a political activist sentenced in 1993 to four years for attacking a police station, an offence that was never on his charge sheet — was arrested in 1992 by ten plainclothes policemen of the Kenyan CID. She was taken to their headquarters with Lydia,

court every fortnight for a "mention".

Such stories are commonplace among the leading opposition political groups, but they have become routine for ordinary Kenyans, as have the "extrajudicial executions" of suspected criminals on the streets.

Two years of research in Kenya also revealed that the Government of the Kenya

Apartheid minister applies for amnesty

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

ADRIAAN VLOK, the former Law and Order Minister, became the first apartheid-era minister to seek amnesty from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. His application came ahead of tomorrow's deadline.

Mr Vlok was implicated in human rights violations in October when General Jothan van der Merwe, a former police commissioner, told the commission that the order to bomb the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches in 1988 was given by Mr Vlok on presidential orders from P. W. Botha.

The allegation appears to have forced Mr Vlok to break ranks with the old National Party high command. So far Mr Botha and his successor, F. W. de Klerk have refused to apply. But General van der Merwe and 50 former police generals have done so, as well as more than 300 from the African National Congress and 600 from the Azanian People's Liberation Army.



A Mai-Mai boy soldier north of Goma. The Mai-Mai have now joined Tutsi rebels

Hutu militia herds refugees out of camp in Tanzania

BY SAM KILEY

ABOUT 90,000 Hutu refugees from Rwanda have fled a camp in northwest Tanzania to avoid being returned to Rwanda to face trial.

United Nations officials blame the exodus on intimidation of the refugees by the Interahamwe — the Rwandan Hutu militia responsible for the 1994 massacres of a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda. The militia is believed to be herding the refugees away from the reach of the forces of the new, Tutsi-led Government in Rwanda as well as to establish military bases in Zambia.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said the refugees left Lumasi camp, northwest Tanzania, after the Dar es Salaam Government ordered that all refugees should return home by the end of the year. Lumasi had provided refuge for 113,000 people. In all there were 542,000 Hutu refugees in Tanzania.

Julie Johnson, of the WFP, said the camp was 80 per cent empty yesterday. She added that the WFP warehouse had been looted.

The looting of food stocks signals that the Interahamwe, who have controlled Lumasi and all other refugee camps in Tanzania, Zaire and Burundi for the last two years, are

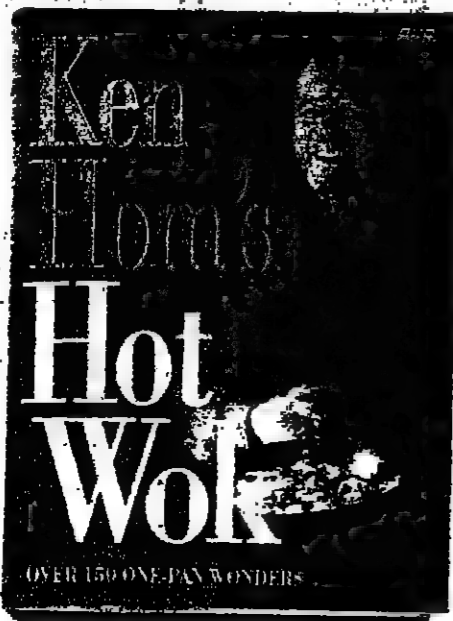
planning a long trek. About 560 Hutu refugees have arrived in Uganda, while others are believed to be marching towards Kenya, which has harboured some of the most notorious leaders of the massacres.

There is still confusion about the whereabouts of tens of thousands of refugees who fled camps in eastern Zaire after the Tutsi Banyamulenge rebels launched retaliatory attacks last month. The Hutus had instigated Zaireans to turn on the Banyamulenge.

Yesterday the Banyamulenge, who now control a swath of territory about 300 miles long from north to south in eastern Zaire, including the main towns of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira, declared a unilateral ceasefire because of pressure from the West. The Banyamulenge, who want to topple the ailing President Mobutu, however, gave a warning that the war "can continue if there is not a clear indication from the international community and the gang in power in Kinshasa to say they are willing to surrender or to start negotiations."

New reports claim that the Mai-Mai have now joined the Banyamulenge rebels. Kinshasa accuses Uganda and Rwanda of helping the rebels.

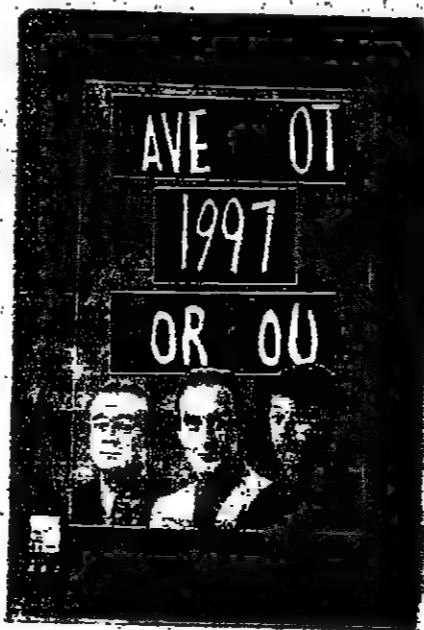
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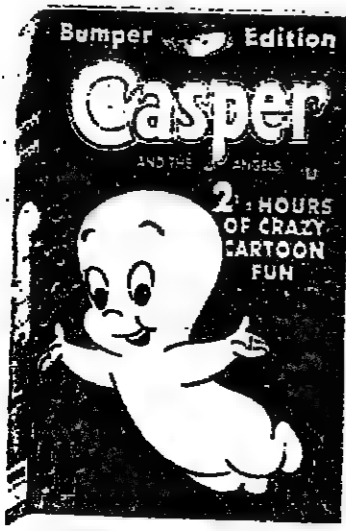
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Helen Steel and David Morris believe that their battle represents a moral victory whatever the verdict

Trial that's made a meal of it

Glance inside the panelled walls of Court 35 at the Royal Courts of Justice today and you will sense the unmistakable, if restrained, whiff of celebration.

After 314 days in which hundreds of witnesses have given evidence and 40,000 documents and 20,000 pages of transcripts have been shuffled back and forth across the benches, the longest trial in British history draws to a close this evening.

For the legal team representing the McDonald's Corporation it means an early Christmas break and a gargantuan sigh of relief that, bar Mr Justice Bell's judgment early next year, "McLibel: The Trial" is finally over. For David Morris and Helen Steel, the penniless, denim-clad campaigners who distributed leaflets criticising McDonald's food, practices and environmental policy and were swiftly sued for defamation, it means freedom. For the first time in two and a half years they can wake up and not have to think about fries, polystyrene burger trays and the corporate clown Ronald McDonald.

From the moment they decided to fight one of the most powerful multinational giants in the world instead of tugging their forelocks and apologising, Morris, 42, and Steel, 32, effectively gave up any semblance of normal life.

Forced to represent themselves in court (libel cases do not qualify for legal aid) they have spent their days pitted against the eminent libel QC Richard Rampton, for McDonald's, and their evenings and weekends in preparation for the next day's hearing, poring over international facts about rainforests, corn seed or battery hens, untrained, unadvised, unwaged — the ultimate David and Goliath battle.

Win or lose, Morris and Steel now believe that they have at least won the moral battle. They have, they say, put McDonald's ethics and practices on trial for the first time and let the public judge for themselves whether the organisation is as oppressive as they claim.

"It will be a weird feeling when we walk out," says Steel, whose father was a union activist from Lancashire. "It has been an incredibly stressful experience — the pressure has been relentless, because we haven't the resources and back-up team they have had, but there is no way we regret it. I feel very positive about the whole thing. People should ask themselves how we managed to get this far."

"Of course there are loads of ways I would rather have spent the last few years of my life, like climbing mountains or working in the countryside, but I was always taught to stand up to things I didn't believe were right."

The former agriculture student, gardener and voluntary worker met Morris, an ex-postman, in a Haringey community action group in the mid-Eighties and via an allotment plot they used to share. Both political activists, their friendship grew while picketing during the miners' strike and they

Carol Midgley reports on Britain's

longest-ever trial, in which two individuals took on the might of McDonald's



became members of London Greenpeace, an environmental and civil rights group which targeted, among other organisations, McDonald's. Five members were issued with writs, three of whom apologised. Steel and Morris refused.

She admires him for his passion and resolve, he admires her for her uncompromising principles and the fact she once went on a week-long hunger strike outside Harrods over Christmas to raise money for famine relief.

One of the most common but incorrect assumptions about their alliance is that they are a "couple", who took on authority together, hand-in-hand. As they sit in Steel's ground-floor bedsit in Tottenham, north London, stacked with files and papers and decorated with crusading posters such as "Solidarity with 500 sacked Liverpool dockers", they smile wearily at the suggestion.

"We are not in a relationship, no, although a lot of people think it," says the bespectacled and teacherish-looking Morris. "I knew I wouldn't be able to take it all on my own but I said to Helen that if she wanted to fight it I would come in with her. I'm glad I did. We are nearing the end of the 20th century and society is clearly at a crossroads."

"We do argue because we are in a very intense situation, but it's usually about the case, nothing else and it helps to clear the air. Basically we both want the same things in society so we get on."

At the time of the writs, September 1990, Morris, the son of a schoolteacher and a tallyman, was living with his then partner

and their young son. The couple has since separated and he now looks after Charlie, 7, alone at their home close to Steel's in Tottenham.

"Charlie has been very patient and understanding. It has been hard because I haven't been able to give him all my attention. Children are the most vulnerable section of society. If I hadn't been in court I would be more involved in my local politics groups and parents' groups at school and play schemes because that is what counts — that is where change is really made."

"I had to bring him into court one day. The central heating at his school had broken down and I could not find a child minder for him. The judge's clerk ended up looking after him all day. He got taken into the room behind the judge's chair and felt very grand."

During the trial the "McLibel Two" have raised less than £40,000 with the help of supporters against McDonald's legal fund of £10 million. Richard Rampton alone is on £2,000 a day. Morris claims income support and Steel works in the bar of a West End nightclub at weekends. Both accept £15 a week travel costs from the McLibel support campaign fund but refuse cash for themselves.

Steel says she has often grown bored in court. Morris says: "I never got bored, but it was a very long drawn-out case." Steel adds: "When it first started we weren't having any days off at all but then we realised that it wasn't sustainable. You have to have days off or you'd go mad. I would sit in the park or go out with friends, but it's always with you. We are only defending our right to free speech and to put powerful companies under scrutiny."

It was on November 1 that the trial passed its milestone of 292 days making it the longest ever. Until then the Tichborne impersonation case of 1871, which comprised a civil and criminal trial and concerned a dispute over the inheritance of the Tichborne Estate in Hampshire, held that distinction, lasting 291 days. Arthur Orton, who had falsely posed as the long-lost brother of the late Baron of Tichborne, was sentenced to two consecutive terms of imprisonment and hard labour.

If Steel and Morris lose, McDonald's has indicated that it will not be seeking damages — just a clarification of accurate facts. However, much of the damage is done. On the Internet is "McSpotlight", set up by supporters of Morris and Steel, which contains millions of words from the trial and clips of film. In its first week it was accessed 174,000 times.

In the meantime, the McLibel Two are looking forward to their first stress-free Christmas for years. Steel will stay with friends and family in Scotland, while Morris will take Charlie to The Netherlands. "It will be our first proper holiday together for four years," he says. "Charlie deserves it and I think that I need it."

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THE SUNDAY TIMES



HEARTS ON FIRE

Can Ralph Fiennes and other Brits still ignite Hollywood?

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Lights, camera, Snowdon: after failing his architecture exams at Cambridge, Snowdon's mother cabled him saying "on no account consider changing to photography"

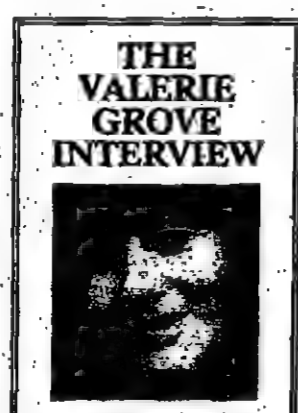
A passion for idiot time

The Earl of Snowdon famously subverts interviews by setting on diversions. "Did you know that if you put Marmite, it turns white? I once rang Marmite about it. A ghastly PR man came on and said (adopts E.L. Winsty voice) 'It is certainly the case that if Marmite is oscillated it will go through a process of oxidation, which discolours the product...' Johnny Dankworth is the only other person I know who is a Marmite eater."

Snowdon's stories and mimicry are much enjoyed by those who sit for him. He cultivates the persona of the mad scientist, indulging as often as possible in what he calls "idiot time", inventing toys, gadgets, silly jokes, any kind of escapism.

His latest album of family snaps, meticulously annotated, reflects this: here is a camp Gothic dogkennel known as the Doge's Palace he made for Maud, his daughter Frances's spaniel; here's a spoof of *Helio* magazine; a picture of his Regent's Park aviary, transposed to his country garden ("That's what you get if you put a used film back in the camera by mistake"), a snap of himself by a *Kentish* roadsign.

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THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW

reading "Glen Close", which he showed to Glenn Close when photographing her for *Vanity Fair* with (stuffed) dalmatian. "I love all this. I am passionate for idiot time."

He inhabits a tiny basement studio, under a house with so many clocks that a clock-winder comes round every Thursday. Next to his office is a tiny loo, where his awards are framed including one for his aviary, "The Second Best Modern Building in London".

He brandishes a picture of a domed pavilion. "What century? What country?" he asks. It's a *troupe*-follie he has built at his house in Sussex, by ingenious use of plywood, breezeblocks and wire. Inside, two naked Adel Rostenstein mannequins recline in 1920s deckchairs. "A folly shouldn't be at all useful," he says, "or it isn't a true folly. This was designed to provide a view while doing the washing up."

Do I recognise this postcard of a Victorian drawing room? It is the glorious Kensington house (open to public view) where Linley, Sambourne,

In his tiny basement studio, the Earl of Snowdon cultivates the persona of the mad scientist, inventing gadgets, jokes and toys

Punch's political cartoonist. Snowdon's great-grandfather, lived. As a child he found it terribly gloomy, yearning for plain white walls. Now fashion has reverted: "Our sitting room upstairs" (where his wife Lucy was) "is an absolute nightmare. Solid with clutter."

He shows me Sambourne's camera-case, which just fits Snowdon's 1950s Rolleiflex. Sambourne was a pioneer photographer: he would get his chauffeur to pose for photographs and draw from them. "Other cartoonists thought this very *mal vu*. But camera obscura is how Canaletto, né Canal, got his perspectives of the Grand Canal and the Thames."

It is 40 years since Tony Armstrong-Jones began taking pictures of actors blown up 10 feet high outside theatres "to get people off buses and into the theatre". A sumptuous new book called *Snowdon on Stage* (with Olivier as Archie Rice, taken from the wings, on the cover) is out on Monday, and an exhibition at the National Theatre opens on January 13.

The pictures are absorbing. They reflect four theatrical decades (Simon Callow contributes an excellent essay) from stylised 1950s portraits in stage make-up, to the zany poses he now gets actors to adopt. Emma Thompson naked after the manner of Velázquez's reclining lady, Barry Humphries inside a commode, Simon Callow with Monet water-lilies, Alan

Rickman in a kilt on the Albert Memorial, Peter Hall with a roadmender, playing the gravedigger in *Hamlet*. John Sessions is Napoleon astride a stuffed pony "holding a frightfully important Ugandan stick, given to me by Mr Obote". Alan Bennett is in Windsor Great Park with four corgis — hired, Snowdon adds, at a cost of £400. "They are not the corgis." At any

Mention his royal family and he says 'Fasten seatbelt'

mention of his royal connection he mutters "Fasten seatbelt". His discretion is impeccable: he would be the last royal to expect to talk to Ruby Wax.

He claims the only effect of the earldom on his career was to stop him taking photographs. Until Mark Boxer brought him into *The Sunday Times* Magazine and "normal life". It probably made him work even harder, propelling him towards social conscience photo-journalism (sometimes, on assignments where reporters were given lunch, a plate would be left in the kitchen

"for the photographer", until they realised who he was) and to TV documentaries with Derek Hart about old age, dwarfs, etc. for which Snowdon won two Emmy awards. (He thought them "vulgar" and sprayed them black.)

We walked 50 yards to his favourite restaurant, where he declared he was never interested in what he ate, then sent back his pheasant saying it was "a bit wonky". As we left, he had to mollify the glowering chefs. He is waspish about publishers who mis-spell names or have their letters signed p.p. "Dear p.p." he writes back. "Do give my love to your managing director, who must be awfully busy." He had just been to Terry Donovan's funeral, which had reduced him to tears.

Photography claimed him when his father paid £100 for an apprenticeship to the society photographer Baron. Having coxed the Cambridge crew to victory in the 1930 Boat Race, he had failed his architecture exams. "My mother cabled saying 'on no account consider changing to photography'."

But then my uncle Oliver Messel's mother was against his becoming a designer — until he became the most successful one in the world. He adored Messel, who introduced him to the theatrical milieu. Snowdon still has his earliest job book: "A Guinness. Actor. Large camera." Even today, at the theatre he looks at sets, costumes and performances, but hardly lis-

tens. "I am not a words person," he says.

We wondered on what subject his country neighbour, the ennobled Maurice Saatchi, would make his maiden speech in the Lords. Snowdon's was about design defects in cars for the disabled.

He designed his famous wheelchair not because he had polio himself, but because his friend Quentin Crewe was confined to an "absolutely disastrous" Ministry of Health chair. "I thought we must do something, not as a do-goody thing but as a challenge. Roy Thomson had kindly given David and Sarah two battery-operated horses: I said, 'You don't need two' and took one of them to bits." (Lord Linley says when he hankered after a toy submarine, his father made one with a piece of wood, a picture hook and a curtain ring.) "Anyway, I based the first prototype on that — and Perry Mason came over to launch it."

Less successful was the Peter Pan which he invented, in which a disabled person could hoist himself out of bed and fly down stairs. The disabled loved it, but it is consigned to his "flops and disasters" file. He may walk with a stick himself, but I can report that Lord Snowdon is exhausting to dance with. He stands on the spot, tapping one foot and vigorously spinning his partner like a dervish.

This year he was appointed Provost of the Royal College of Art. He loves the work but do I realise that the students' average age is 29? He started work at 20 and so did his son. And at 66 all he wants to do is keep on working. As long as he can combine it with idiot time.

Cousins get the royal blessing

Joe Joseph on the must-have accessory for the new year

COUSINS! You don't live with them, and suddenly you can't live without them. Having only just made negligees so fashionable that the invitation "don't bother dressing for dinner" now sends out a really relaxed message, Diana, Princess of Wales, has now also made cousins cool by putting a snap of Princes William and Harry with their cousins, Princesses Eugenie and Beatrice on the front of her Christmas cards.

With this kind of blessing, cousins, whom the most recent generation of children only saw at weddings and funerals, could become the must-have accessory of 1997. Cousins faded from our lives along with extended families, in which three generations would live in each other's pockets, creating a handy source of playmates, babysitters and loans. As a result of this social shift, cousins have tended to see less and less of each other over the past 30 years — unless, of course, some special bond made it seem sensible for them to be close, such as belonging to a Mafia family in Calabria.

But now a rising divorce rate has thrown single parents — and their children — more deeply into the lives of their siblings and in-laws.

At the same time, a preference for smaller families — who has the money, time or energy today to raise half a dozen children? — has endowed cousins with a new sense of purpose.

They have become the 1990s version of brothers and sisters, with the bonus that if you get on with them you can even marry them —

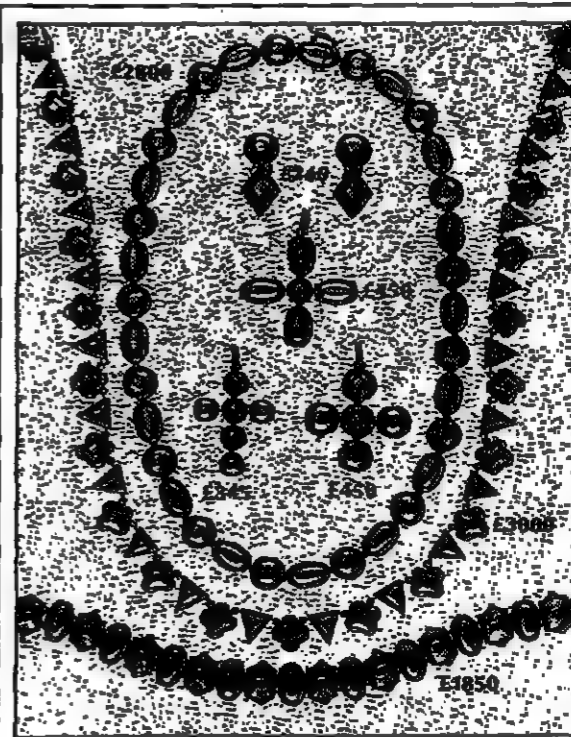


Diana's Christmas card

which you can only do with siblings (and even then only on a very informal basis) in certain scary backwaters of America's Deep South.

But since they are not your brother or sister, cousins can also provide a useful refuge from your sibling family, especially if your sibling is, say, Roger Clinton. Billy's brother, a reformed drug addict whose US secret service codename is Headache. Or Billy Carter, President Jimmy's brother, who registered as an agent for the Libyan Government.

OF COURSE, there is a downside to cousins. "Every man," said H.L. Mencken, "sees in his relations, and especially in his cousins, a series of grotesque caricatures of himself." This is why seeing your cousins is both warming and chilling: they are a vision of possibilities of what you might have been, which is fine if you're Paul Newman's cousin. Less reassuring if you're Gazza's.



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Paris wants Britain in a euro zone

Hervé de Charette says Europe needs faster integration now

We are on the eve of momentous decisions for the future of Europe. The post-war era is over. The Continent is no longer divided. To the east, the enthusiasm of the early years after 1989 has abated, and tough tasks lie ahead. Economic competition is sharpening on a planetary scale.

The French historian Fernand Braudel reminds us that "Europe is scarcely visible on a map of the world". We shall shortly have several opportunities to make Europe a force to be reckoned with, to lay the groundwork for a stable Europe founded upon solidarity. France and Great Britain must grasp them together.

France, like Britain, warmly supports the candidature of the Central and East European states for EU membership. The European enterprise will become fully meaningful once they stand at our side. My Government has proposed a European conference to maintain a dialogue with these countries during the accession negotiations.

Finally, France, having observed with interest the remarkable work of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, wants to make Europe more democratic, by giving national Parliaments a greater role alongside the European Parliament. My Government will endeavour to reinforce the concept of subsidiarity, which is still too vague.

France and Britain share the same ambitious view of Europe's missions in the field of security and defence. Europe must have the capacity to make its voice heard in external policy. My Government attaches great importance to ensuring that this inter-governmental conference results in the development of a genuine European security and defence identity. We see the European Council as the keystone of this structure, with the Western European Union (WEU) as its operational military arm, able to draw on Nato's resources. In particular, we want included in the treaty the prospect of incorporating the WEU into the EU. This will be at the forefront of our minds during our coming WEU Presidency.

In line with what the French and British both argued for in Berlin last year, new prospects are opening up within the Atlantic Alliance. We are very keen to ensure that the admission of new members will be detrimental to no one.

Nato's enlargement affords Europeans a unique opportunity to work towards a European defence with a significant capability. My Government has boldly gambled that the Alliance is sufficiently determined to regenerate itself to give fuller recognition to the EU as a political entity. In a spirit of wholehearted co-operation with our partners, especially the Americans, we will consider whether the European defence identity is becoming a reality within Nato. If that condition is satisfied, France will gladly resume its full position within Nato.

But enlargement must not entail any dilution of the spirit of the original Community, nor should it paralyse its institutions. So we intend to grasp this opportunity to reform the EU in depth: the organs designed for six no longer always function efficiently with 15 members. Merely tinkering with the rules would be a step backwards. That is why France wants to restore a balanced voting system in the Council, cut Commission staff and reinforce its President's authority, before enlargement.

France's prime ambition remains the pursuit of EU integration. Europe is much more than a conjunction of interests or a free-trade area. We quite understand that not all countries are simultaneously ready to move forward. But we place a high premium on the freedom of those that do want to forge ahead. Consequently, with our German partners, we have proposed a mechanism of "enhanced co-operation" to enable certain states in the EU to take initiatives in which others cannot, or do not wish to, participate for the time being. We expect real progress to be made at the Dublin European Council.

Monetary union will also be at the centre of discussions in Dublin and during the coming year. My Government, which is pursuing a resolute policy in favour of the euro, is pleased to see that several member states share a similar commitment. We must establish an exchange-rate mechanism bringing all the member states into a euro stability zone and demonstrating the Union's monetary stability. Our businesses would gain from the absence of competitive devaluation.

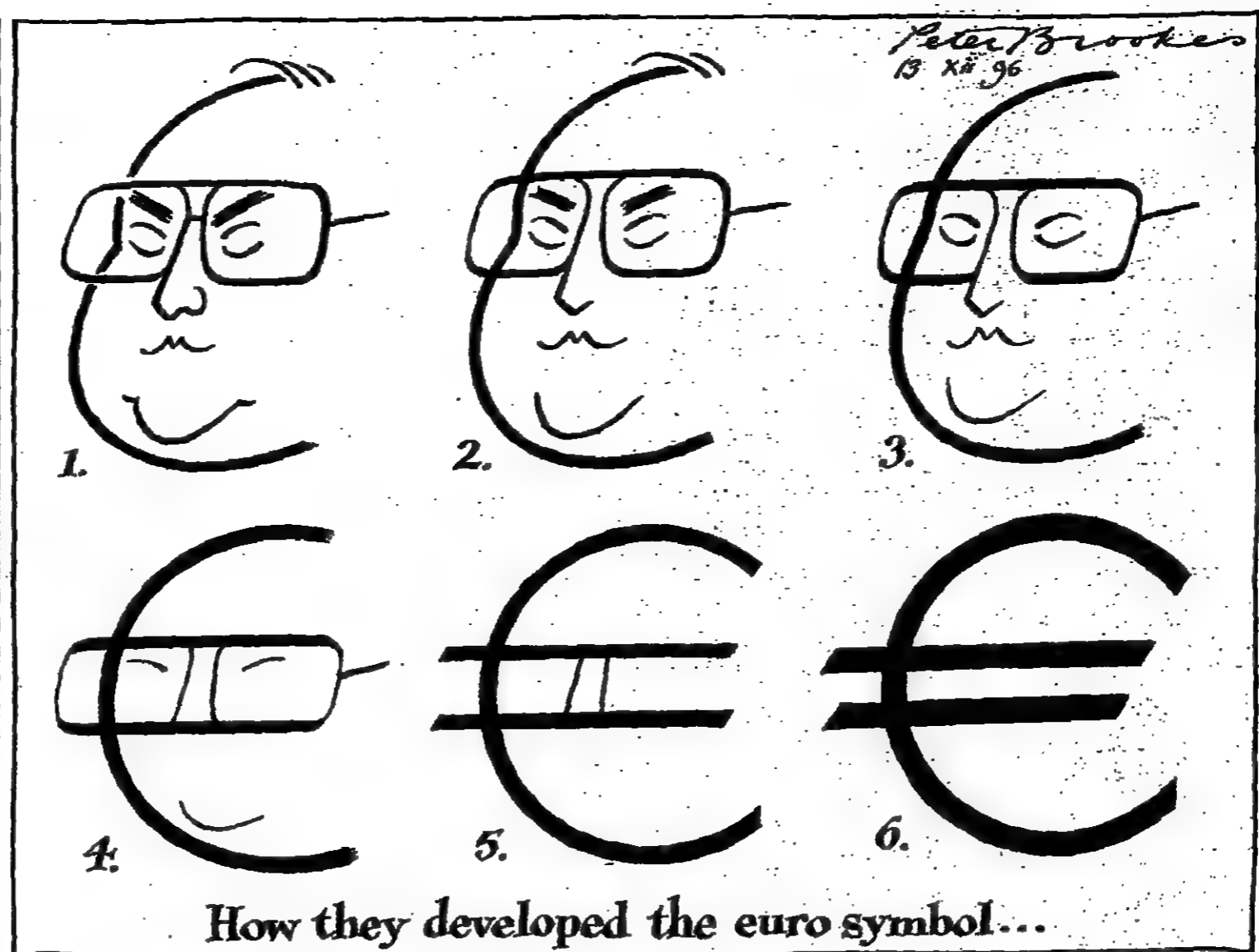
Nor should Europe's citizens lose out. We want to propose a model of society in which the market is regulated, but not hindered. France has therefore submitted a social memorandum proposing a minimum standard of protection for workers, without causing damaging distortions in the single market. Here, too, our ambition is to achieve significant results in Dublin.

The recent decision to develop Franco-British co-operation in the naval sphere is a welcome sign that Europeans are taking their security in hand. And our two Governments, conscious of the proximity of their positions, have demonstrated their reliability through commitments on the ground, especially in Bosnia.

Finally, this global approach needs to be completed by a European policy on armaments. By combining our technological strengths, we shall lay the foundations of a genuine European defence and withstand international competition. The British presence in the new Joint Armaments Co-operation Organisation and Western European Armaments Organisation, forerunner of the European Arms Agency, is invaluable.

France has great ambitions for Europe. She knows that Britain will not shirk her responsibilities. Only by making a success of the European project will we be able to keep alive the flame that, down the centuries, has made our nations great.

The author is the French Foreign Minister.



How they developed the euro symbol...

No room down under

A wicked wizard in Oz has devised an entry form of diabolical nosiness

I have many times visited Australia, on business or pleasure or both at once (and in Australia the two merge, so open and welcoming are Australia's people), and for many years I noticed that the visitors' entry form was much the same as New Zealand's, both of them being the most simple and homely document. Of course, I realised that the generosity of an entry into Australia mirrored the openness of its peoples; Australians are open and immediately friendly. But at some point, something happened that changed the pattern. No, the Australians have not become sour and mean; they are as open and friendly as they have always been. So what has changed? The answer is not the people, it is pieces of paper.

The first change I noticed was that New Zealand's entry form was still roughly the same as it had been, but the Australian one had changed somewhat, and changed considerably for the worse.

To start with, the document needed to enter Australia — and this, you must understand, is only the "Application to visit Australia for tourism or other recreational activities" is five full large pages, or ten columns, or 11ft of bumph!

It starts most charmingly, saying, "Do not buy your tickets or finalise your arrangements before a visa is granted, unless we ask you to provide evidence of confirmed arrangements". That's not even getting into gear: we are idiots from the start, viz "You must answer all questions and write neatly in BLOCK LETTERS" and "You must answer all questions honestly and completely".

Shucks. Try this: "The information provided might also be disclosed to agencies who are authorised to receive information relating to border control, health assessment, law enforcement, education, payment of pensions and benefits, refugees, taxation, and review of decisions."

Now, it is obvious that few countries want people from other countries who cannot support themselves financially and show no sign of trying to do so. Visitors are welcome — certainly Australia makes them welcome — but not if they make clear that they are going to live off the indigenous, hard-working citizens. (Andrew Symonds the English cricketer had a different problem, but he has decided to go back and become Symonds the Australian cricketer.) But surely Australia shouldn't get

the beebe-jeebies if someone finds that someone else has landed with nothing but fourpence and a lollipop? No, indeed, but we are now not discussing Australia and her great peoples, we are discussing the dreadful Prodnoise and his pages and pages of whining. Try this: "The criterion 'adequate funds' may be satisfied by showing personal bank statements, money transfer receipts, pay slips, audited accounts, taxation records or cash in hand, depending on the amount of money represented, the number of persons to support, the type of activities planned and the length stay sought."

Then sex raises its head — I knew it would. Try this for impudence: "Marital status — select one box which best describes your current situation: Married, Engaged, Divorced, Widowed, Never married (that's me folks), Separated but not divorced."

And then, "Why do you want to visit Australia?" The answer should be "Well, certainly not to meet you, you pimply prat". Next, Dr Goebbels asks "Do you have any relatives, friends or contacts who will visit in Australia?", and don't believe it when he says that it might be a help if a visitor should be injured or ill, because that bit has already been taken care of.

It hoots up now, "Are you currently employed?" Again, it is nothing but impudence, because of course the real questions have been dealt with. But Prodnoise wants more, much more, and he snaps: "Your current occupation?" "Name or person of company who employs you?" "Address of employer?" "Employer's telephone number?" (Yes, our little worm demands the telephone number of every person who touches this form — not just those actually visiting.)

And now Prodnoise wants to know: "How long have you been employed by this employer?" "How much leave has been approved by your employer for the time you wish to visit Australia?" "Has your employer agreed that you will still have a job when you return from Australia?" I

don't know about that, but if the employer is of sturdy form, a punch on the nose would most fitting. Now you can almost see Prodnoise rectifying the next bit, which goes like this: "Have you or any children included in this application ever had, or currently have, tuberculosis or any serious disease (including mental illness), condition or disability?", and of course Prodnoise has seen to it that the subsidiary question is: "Is the disease likely to be a cost to the Australian community?"

But of course, I am only marking time before the toughest of all the No/Yes questions: "Have you, or any children included in this application: ● Been convicted of a crime or any offence in any country? ● Been acquitted of any offence or any crime on the grounds of mental illness, insanity or unsoundness of mind? ● Been deported from any country? ● Left any country voluntarily prior to the execution of a deportation order? ● Been excluded from or required to leave any country? ● Ever had an application for entry to Australia refused or a visa cancelled? ● Been involved in any activities that would represent a risk to Australian security? ● Ever committed, or been involved in the commission of war crimes or crimes against humanity or human rights? And finally — you guessed it — ● Any outstanding debts to the Australian Government?"

Bernard Levin

- Grounds of mental illness, insanity or unsoundness of mind?
- Been deported from any country?
- Left any country voluntarily prior to the execution of a deportation order?
- Been excluded from or required to leave any country?
- Ever had an application for entry to Australia refused or a visa cancelled?
- Been involved in any activities that would represent a risk to Australian security?
- Ever committed, or been involved in the commission of war crimes or crimes against humanity or human rights?
- And finally — you guessed it —
- Any outstanding debts to the Australian Government?

Now as a matter of fact I have to say yes to several of these items. No, I have not been acquitted of any criminal or other offence "on the grounds of mental illness, insanity or unsoundness of mind", but I have been required to leave another country, indeed several times and several countries. And before Prodnoise starts to scream the place down, let him know that I am proud

of those times when I was ejected. For the first of these chuckings-out were from South Africa, when it was still in the foul days of apartheid when black men were thought of as animals; and the other ejection was from what was then called the Soviet Union, which was then ruled by the hideous criminal called Brezhnev, who presided with savage brutality.

Now please understand that these ten columns of bumph were not created by any of the Australians I have met or indeed heard of, and I am sure that any decent Australian, shown these papers, would be horrified. The trouble is, that these papers are not shown to Australians. Why should they be? After all, these papers concern only the entry to Australia for non-Australians, and have nothing to do with Australian rules or orders, and I should think that only one in a thousand native Australians has even seen them.

But that brings me back to those daft and offensive ten columns of — well, of what? I shall tell you. These words were put together by a committee — no single human being could have devised them. The members of the committee began to put in ideas, whereas other members put in more ideas, whereas more and more ideas, and after a very long time, a very long time, the 11ft of bumph saw the light of darkness.

But this is Australia! Australia, the country I love next only to my own! Australia, the country with its ease and kindness, its bravery and laughter, its beer and its shakehands, its music and its theatre, its generosity and its understanding, its quiet suburbs with their curtains and its marvellous contempt for its MPs, its immense size and incredible landscape, its unique accent, and its glorious seafaring with its glorious, thrice glorious Sydney Opera House — assuredly the most striking operation-house in the world.

Come, come, Australia. You can do better than this. No, I am not going to say that all frontiers should be abolished, and that anyone should be able to go anywhere, anyhow, with or without money. But I am saying that the document which greets non-Australian would-be visitors is a smudge on the great name of Australia. And if you agree, let me help to pile up those shoddy documents into a huge mound, and let me strike the first match. And let Prodnoise get the first smudge.

Bit of bias?

BOWLS is emerging as one of the National Lottery's biggest winners. Flat green, crown green, indoor and outdoor, the sport is clearing up. "Every day, we seem to get more and more applications for money from bowls clubs — more than from any other kind of

organisation," says one responsible for dishing up from the trough. "I cannot work it out."

In fact, it is simple: the hands that trim those lawns and cut translucent cucumber slices for tea are equally effective when turned to filling out wodes of lottery

grant application forms. Estimates of successful applications reach £20 million. "We now rank fourth in sports grants," says a proud Fred Inch, deputy secretary of the English Bowling Association in Worthing. "We explained to our members how to apply in our yearbook and now hundreds of thousands of pounds are flooding in for new pavilions, converting greens from grass to artificial turf, bowls and mats."

When confronted by whingers from the Arts Council last month, Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, said: "Bowls clubs and Scout groups have done well out of the lottery because the people who run them appreciate the possibilities. The Arts Council can do the same."

Outrageous

IN NODDERS' corner at the bar of the Garrick, they are conspiring against the member who wrote of the club in a national newspaper: Alexander Chancellor, the columnist and former Editor of The Spectator.

After the club was visited by the Queen recently, it withstood a spirited broadside from A.N. Wilson, a columnist in the Evening Standard. Chancellor responded in The Guardian. "As a member of the



club," he wrote airily. "I am not allowed to divulge what goes on inside, but on this special occasion, I expect it is all right to report that the Queen was looking very well and rather cuddly in her turquoise suit and that the Duke was wearing the salmon-and-cucumber Garrick Club tie which is so popular with the club's more ostentatious members. I hate the tie myself and never wear it."

He may no longer be able to. Moves are afoot to expel him.

Will he?

THE HEAD may have come off David Willetts' political career, but the chicken is still running. Yesterday morning around London, invitations were delivered by hand to a reception in honour of the "Leaders of the Congressional

Delegations on Privatisations and Deregulation" from America, a jamboree to be hosted by D. Willetts, MP, "Paymaster General and Minister of State of the Office of Public Service". Michael Bates, however, was roped in as host at the last minute.

Pig problems

GERMANY is reeling after the star of one of the most popular recent children's films, *Rudi Snout the Racing Pig*, died during filming. Seven pigs played the part of



Rudi, but one didn't survive a scene in which it had to drink five bottles of beer, stagger about a bit, then undergo an injection. An animal rights league is taking the producers to court under animal protection laws, brushing off suggestions that, after five bottles of good German beer, the beast died happier than the rest, which ended up as German sausages.

Not so civil

DECEMBER is a time for laughter in the home of Teresa Gorman. Technicolor Tory MP for Billerica, as shown by her Christmas card. Giving a firm kick to the council planners who ordered Mrs Gorman to remove certain additions they had made to their old farmhouse, it shows a goaty looking Robinson Crusoe type on a desert island, standing by his just completed shelter. Behind him looms a bowler-hatted civil servant saying: "Good morning, I'm from the council planning department — I'd like a word."

● In an 81st birthday tribute to Frank Sinatra, "Ole Blue Eyes", the Empire State Building in Manhattan was illuminated last night with hundreds of blue lights.

P.H.S



The bowlers are bolder — so they are cleaning up Lottery's cash



DANGERS OF DISDAIN

Politicians cannot afford to ignore voters' views on Europe

The last refuge of a British politician on the defensive over Europe is to claim that the issue obsesses only a small coterie of metropolitan scribblers. While the "chattering classes" agonise over the single currency, they say, voters have more important things to worry about, such as hospitals, schools, crime or the economy. Our latest MORI poll puts the lie to that claim.

Asked what were the most important issues facing Britain today, our respondents placed Europe only narrowly behind the top concern, health. For most of this year, Europe has ranked fifth in importance, mentioned by some 20 per cent. Now the issue has raced up to second place with 38 per cent. Of course, the argument has dominated the media; but for years there has barely been a month when it has not.

What makes the finding all the more interesting is that no single event has propelled Europe up the list. In the past, European dramas have tended to increase the salience of Europe in voters' minds. But even Black Wednesday and Maastricht failed to boost the issue to the heights that it has now achieved. The 38 per cent of voters expressing concern about Europe this month compares with 22 per cent in the week after sterling crashed out of the exchange-rate mechanism and 19 per cent after the Government was forced to hold a vote of confidence over Maastricht. Nothing that has happened recently compares with those two events. Voters are now properly addressing their minds to one of the most critical issues this country has faced since the war.

Politicians across Europe have shown a disdain verging on the reckless for the views of their electorates about the future development of the EU. When the Danes voted against Maastricht, the treaty should have been rethought. Instead the Danes were told to carry on voting until they came back with the desired answer. The latest opinion poll in

Germany shows that 61 per cent are alarmed by economic and monetary union. They reject the single currency by a margin of nearly two to one. Yet still Helmut Kohl ploughs ahead in bald defiance of the wishes of his people. Yesterday the German Chancellor seemed to have decided that if logical argument would not sway his voters, they would have to be scared into submission. "The concept of the European Union is the only way we can set ourselves against nationalism, power politics and war," he claimed.

Certainly war has been prevented in Western Europe for the past half-century; the pacifying force has been NATO far more than the EU. But the notion that further integration is necessary to stop the Continent erupting into nationalism is highly questionable. The opposite is more likely: deeper integration is the greatest potential catalyst for conflict. When politicians go too far against the wishes of their voters, discontent arises. In Germany, where the mark is as totemic as the Union Jack to the British, EMU will bring real anger.

The single currency carries big dangers for democracy. In less competitive countries, it will lead to high levels of unemployment and long recessions. Voters will demand action, but governments will admit themselves impotent to address these problems, as they will have no control over interest rates or exchange rates. So voters will turn to opposition parties. But they too will have to throw up their hands. When this happens, the levers of democracy will be seen to be useless. It is bad enough when politicians do not listen. It is worse when they are powerless to respond. What more fertile ground could there be for the resurgence of nationalist parties? The protection of sovereignty is not just the hunger for power of greedy politicians; it is the *sine qua non* of healthy democracy, and of a peaceful Europe.

TRIMBLE'S TACTICS

Unionists mull their options as Major loses his majority

With the predictable Labour victory in the Barnsley East by-election last night, John Major's majority in the House of Commons finally ended. The fractious nature of the Conservatives in Parliament makes this a *de facto* minority administration. In such circumstances, usually less consequential parties acquire a new standing. David Trimble has now been cast as Westminster's Warwick the Kingmaker, the man with the power to produce an earlier election and almost certain Conservative defeat.

To some of the old school in Ulster such a possibility seems shocking. Conservatives and Unionists share a long bloodline. Virtually all the most passionate supporters of their cause among mainland politicians remain within Tory ranks. Until recently Labour was considered distinctly hostile. History, however, has two sides. It has been more than 20 years since the various Ulster Unionist groupings broke with Smith Square. Conservatives in office have a checked record from a loyalist perspective: Edward Heath produced the Sunningdale compact for power-sharing; Margaret Thatcher the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985; and John Major the Downing Street declaration.

By contrast, it was the Attlee Government which incorporated the rights of Northern Ireland's majority into statute in 1949. Harold Wilson who abandoned the Sunningdale framework, and James Callaghan who appointed Roy Mason, a supreme hawk on security matters, to run Northern Ireland's affairs. Just as in office the Tories must always bend over backwards on the National Health Service, the Labour Party in power can never appear soft on the IRA. The past may give Mr Trimble food for thought; the immediate present, however,

frames his calculations. A hung Parliament after the next contest would maximise his authority. If that possibility looks increasingly remote he must ponder how best to frame his relations with an incoming Labour Prime Minister. Hastening his arrival may help Mr Trimble's influence.

The room for such strategies is more limited than it looks. The Labour Party is not going to offer the Unionists any arrangements — explicit or implicit — before the election. Even if it did, no such bargain could be guaranteed once Tony Blair entered Downing Street. Nor can the Conservatives afford the impression that they would trade their positions in the peace process for parliamentary advantage.

Mr Trimble certainly should be talking to Mr Blair, as he will today. For while it is clear what Labour's stance on Northern Ireland now is not, it is far less certain what it actually is. If that dialogue forced Mr Blair and his associates to think through how they intend to handle what is becoming an increasingly difficult inheritance in Ulster, then the Opposition would be enriched by such conversations even if proved of no assistance in a confidence motion.

Despite all the temptation, Mr Trimble should avoid trying to be too clever by half. Ultimately, the Unionists must reach their conclusions based on the specific questions that confront them in the Commons and on the interests of their constituents both as residents of Northern Ireland and citizens of the United Kingdom. Single-issue politics and smoke-filled rooms are unlikely to deliver real rewards. There is nothing to be won from stating that Ulster is as British as Huntingdon or Sedgefield, and then behaving in a manner which suggests it is not.

OLD TARZAN'S PRACTICAL CATS

Run with the mice, but mouse with the cats

Not catfery, fat catfery.
No wild game's like fat catfery.
There never was a trade for such
Executive stroking and cat flatfery.
For top cats are disappointed THAT
The public always thinks of them as FAT.
But anyone in business knows
Top cats are mean and lean and fit,
And for Enterprise UK Inc.
All more than do their bit.
So yesterday top cats took breakfast
(It was meant to be by stealthy)
Proclaiming that their only business
Is creating Britain's wealth.
And not seven-figure salaries
Nor a stretched cat limousine.
Nor the other top cat perquisites
Which cat-haters call "obscene".
Sir Colin of the British Airways
And John Neill of Unipart
Told the rows of cat executives
That they should now take heart.
Purr proud for privatised cat litter.
Yowl the trumpet, scratch the drum,
Proclaim how much they earn for Britain —
THEN a better image will come.
There were cats from oil, and cats from wine,
And cats from the utilities,
And plutocrats and Eurocats —
But NO toms from public utilities.
I might mention Mungoesdric,
I could name-drop Pitcherbone
And all those other top cats
Whose share options are widely known.
Careful cats sent their excuses,

Diplomatic pussies pleaded 'flur'.
But the cats passed *nem. con.* a motion
Of what every top cat knew:
They are friends of Michael Heseltine.
But to keep feline friendships fair,
They also count on the support
Of arch catophile, nice Mr Tony Blair.
Cats are not party political.
Nor against the windfall tax.
To get big government off their backs.
And to show there is no nicer way
To kill a cat than choking it with cream.
They had breakfast at the Lanesborough.
The most expensive hotel ever seen.
For site-owner of top cats' hotel
Is hereditary fat cat of state:
Norman Gros Veneur, "Fat Hunting Cat".
Of the Grosvenor Estate.
Top cats are sleek, they can be fun.
Women think they have the charm of Cupid.
But they did not get where they have got
From being rash or stupid.
So the fat cats voted cream for all.
With a lobby to misow it.
With kippers and fish fingers.
When some Chancellor will allow it.
A clever cat eats cheese then breathes
Down rat holes with baited breath.
But for cats to take up politics
Would be like waiting death.
So to parade their patriotic lack of fat
And keep open every OPTION,
They'll wait till after the election
For their campaign's ADOPTION.

Willetts case and MPs' standards

From Mr Andrew Dyke

Sir, The real shame of the report of the Committee on Standards and Privileges is their decision in future to take evidence from MPs under oath (reports, December 12). It is utterly disgraceful that Members have, by continuing misbehaviour and a dissembling disregard for the simple ethical code that governs the lives of most of us, allowed the esteem in which they are held to have fallen so far that even their colleagues no longer believe them to be likely to speak truthfully.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW DYKE,
40 Compton Road,
Winchmore Hill, N21,
December 12.

From Mr Patrick Mulcahy

Sir, Another "honourable" resignation; where is the honour in a resignation brought about directly as a result of public condemnation by one's peers, for patently dishonourable behaviour?

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK MULCAHY,
17 Milton Close,
Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire,
December 11.

Civil servants

From Mr Denis Meehan

Sir, The Deputy Prime Minister accuses civil servants of "leaking" confidential information and his evidence seems to consist of a file of press cuttings (report, December 11). What brass neck.

For years now civil servants, like other public-sector workers, have been rubbished by their political bosses. They have been privatised, contracted out, hired off into "agencies" and sold at every conceivable opportunity that they were vastly inferior to their counterparts in the private sector. The very notion of public service as a good in itself has been all but destroyed by the free-market dogma and the sleazy practice of modern Conservatism.

Michael Heseltine should give thanks that the loyalty of the vast majority of civil servants has survived intact this determined assault from his party, not brand the whole service with the shame of the few.

Yours faithfully,
DENIS MECHAN,
258 Upper Richmond Road,
Putney, SW15,
December 12.

From Mr Bill Kearns

Sir, It is ironic that Mr Heseltine should be so concerned about leakage from the Civil Service. He has been a member of a government that has politicised the Civil Service; has confused the protection of information that needs to be protected for reasons of state security with information which, if disclosed, would be politically embarrassing to the present Government and has shown no inclination to produce the more open government we were promised over a decade ago.

In such an environment it is hardly surprising that the leak has emerged as the counterbalance and check to further authoritarian administration. As a democrat Mr Heseltine should be pleased that our society is capable of adjusting to counter the influence and excesses of the powerful.

Yours ever,
BILL KEARNS,
11 Court Royal Mews,
Northlands Road,
Southampton, Hampshire,
December 12.

Monetary union

From Sir William Nicol

Sir, Drawing on his experience as a Commission official involved in exchange-rate policy, Mr Bernard Connolly (letter, November 27) warns that even if Britain does not join the monetary union it may find itself in the toils of Article 109m of the treaty on European Union. This requires member states to treat their exchange policy as a matter of common interest. Protocol 11 makes it clear that this Article applies to the UK despite the opt-out.

Mr Connolly does not however remind us that Article 109m is not new. It is a watered-down version of the old Article 107. This went further than 109m by providing that if a member state seriously distorts the conditions of competition (eg, by devaluing), the Commission — unusually acting within its own powers — may authorise other member states to take counter-measures.

Old Article 107 was never invoked against non-participants in the European monetary system. On precedent the new version will not be either. The practical demonstration is that last summer President Chirac did not seek to invoke it against what he then regarded as an undervalued lira; instead the French have now used it to secure Italy's re-entry into the EMS.

Yours faithfully,
W. NICOL,
(Director General,
Council of the EU, 1982-91)
Outback, Nackington Road,
Canterbury, Kent,
December 6.

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Sport letters, page 38

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Afghan struggle rooted in history

From the Bishop of Rochester

Sir, I am sure that your report by Anthony Loyd, "Starving Kabul sells bones of the dead to survive" (December 9), has moved many people.

When, in the early 1980s, the Soviet Union supported a pro-communist regime in Afghanistan by sending troops, I opposed this action publicly, bringing down on myself the wrath of the pro-Soviet churches.

By communist standards, however, the regime that came to power was moderate and became increasingly so as it adapted to the Afghan context. Both the Western powers and the Pakistani military regime of the time were, nevertheless, determined to push the Soviets out and to make Afghanistan the "Vietnam" of the Soviet Union.

To this end, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of sophisticated arms were supplied to the Afghan Mujahidin fighting the Soviet-backed Government. Many of these Mujahidin came from other parts of the Muslim world and most were trained and supported in Pakistan and in other neighbouring countries. Pakistan was also host to millions of Afghan refugees who were forced to flee the civil war — and was the major conduit for arms supplies.

The Mujahidin were a motley crew representing a host of competing ideologies. Some were more moderate than others, but the harvest of western support for them has been bitter indeed.

The country of Afghanistan has been destroyed by a generation of civil war, the liberties of its citizens, espe-

cially of women, curtailed to an extent unimaginable under the former "communist" regime.

Pakistan is awash with arms and drugs and the violence these have brought. Now, according to your correspondent, it buys the bones of the dead. The battlefields have provided a fruitful training ground for militant fundamentalists from many different parts of the world. I believe that the Afghan struggle has influenced nearly every other conflict in the Muslim world, all because the West wanted to teach the Soviet Union a lesson.

Churches in the West are not exempt from blame. Only too often they were co-opted by their governments to pick up the humanitarian costs of the conflict: very rarely did they ask whether the conflict was necessary.

Afghanistan is not an isolated instance of a political or strategic mistake. The West has supported conservative and even fundamentalist regimes throughout the region, while opposing "progressive" regimes such as that of Mosaddeq in Iran and Nasser in Egypt because its own interests were perceived to be in jeopardy. We are now reaping the whirlwind.

Both the Western powers and Pakistan now have a responsibility to ensure that basic human rights in Afghanistan are not violated in the name of culture or religion. The United Nations needs to bring pressure to bear on all groups to respect the rights of those who are powerless.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL ROFFEN,
Bishopscourt, Rochester, Kent,
December 9.

Fatigue syndrome

From Dr Colin Fink

Sir, There are a number of us who find ourselves outside the consensus of the Royal Colleges concerning so-called post-viral fatigue.

I have seen a number of patients with absolutely no previous evidence of psychiatric illness and normal personalities who nevertheless suffer the long drawn out difficulties of fatigue and unpredictable fits of exhaustion after an apparently trivial illness.

Contrary to Dr Thomas Sutcliffe's comment (report, December 6) that "it is not a distinct disease caused by a single agent; we do not know whether a single agent is involved in triggering this illness or whether it is a particular host response to a variety of infectious agents."

There is evidence from the literature that some individuals appear to develop a changed and blunted response to their own hormones, but on blood biochemical testing they appear to have normal hormone levels.

It is a matter of concern that many physicians have stopped looking at or listening to the patient and rely only on biochemical and laboratory data. A thorough medical history and careful examination can still provide most important diagnostic evidence of an illness.

We are using and developing a number of molecular diagnostic techniques of remarkable sensitivity coupled with thorough old fashioned medicine to try and see whether there is an infectious agent that triggers this distressing condition.

One of the diagnostic difficulties is that many patients who find themselves chronically unwell and exhausted quite naturally become de-

pressed. It is this depression which reinforces the pattern of the illness.

It is depressing for patients to be pigeonholed as suffering from a primarily psychological illness when so little hard data is presently available.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN FINK (Clinical virologist and general practitioner),
Microbiology Ltd,
Institute of Research and Development,
University of Birmingham
Research Park, Vincent Drive,
Edgbaston, Birmingham,
December 6.

From Dr John H. Greensmith

Sir, The Royal Colleges joint report, which at last recognises a genuine illness, comes out in favour of the term chronic fatigue syndrome rather than ME, which it rightly criticises because there is no evidence for inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. There has long been some reservation in the ME associations for the same reason.

One reason for clinging to ME, however, is that it recognises a particular disorder rather than a number of illnesses in which fatigue may be but one factor and which could all be subsumed under the more general chronic fatigue syndrome. Let's keep it, it is argued, until we find a more appropriate label.

Rather than bicker over nomenclature, may I suggest that we all co-operate in some decently funded international research and then, on the basis of findings, worry about the best name for it.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN GREENSMITH,
36a North Street, Downend, Bristol,
December 6.

Albright's appointment

From the Reverend Margaret L. Dadds

Sir, Your New York reporter does us all a disservice by discussing the appointment of Madeleine Albright as America's first female Secretary of State (December 6) in almost wholly sexist language.

He portrays this "divorced mother-of-three" as one whose reputation for "unladylike" bluntness nevertheless allows her to "play to" a domestic audience in her "earnestness to please Congress" and who has "courted Senator Jesse Helms" who is "clearly charmed" by her, a sign he will not oppose the confirmation of her appointment. The final paragraph is devoted to her perennial weight problem.

I cannot imagine such an article

being printed about any previous Secretary of State. Her superb education is scarcely mentioned (Wellesley College and Columbia).

And surely your reporter could have found someone from the UN to assess her work besides the anonymous officials who passed on venomous undocumented epithets like "Half-Bright".

We need a more intelligent appraisal of this powerful appointment and its potential for good or ill in a changing world.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET L. DODDS
(Co-Pastor,
North Bradford Group
United Reformed Church),
418 Livingstone Road,
Bradford, West Yorkshire,
December 6.

Hitler's Jewish soldiers

From Mr Charles Corman

Sir, Bernard Levin (article, "Hitler's martial Jews", December 6) agonises over those part-Jews and, occasionally, full-Jews who fought for Hitler in the Second World War.

The answer is to be found in the article itself. At no point does Mr Levin refer to their Jewishness or any ties they had with the Jewish religion, culture or heritage.

"Jewish blood", to use Mr Levin's expression, when divorced from Jewish spiritual values, makes a person no different from anyone else and therefore, in the Nazi era, just as capable as the next German of fighting for Hitler.

This issue is highly relevant, particularly in the context of today's moral debate, for all who cut off their links with their spiritual past.

Yours truly,
CHARLES CORMAN,
2 Serjants' Inn, EC4,
December 9.

Scottish justice

From Mr Robert Clow

Sir, Yesterday's second leader, "Lancaster lessons", referred to the "occasional" superiority of Scots to English law. Those who live up here might be forgiven if they normally referred to the occasional superiority of the English variety, when reading your reports on criminal justice.

At its best, there would appear to be a greater chance of obtaining justice under Scots law; at its worst, if a member of the criminal class, one can occasionally go "scot-free" (no relation) should the case be "not proven".

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT CLOW,
Aiket Castle,
Dunlop, Ayrshire,
December 11.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Financial crisis at Royal Academy

From Mr Richard Sorrell

Sir, When reading of the Royal Academy's troubles (reports and article, December 7), one cannot but reflect that this fine institution deserves better.

The great exhibitions introduce fine art to the public as do the state-funded museums. The Summer Exhibitions encourage artists on an enormous scale. The schools, now more than ever before, provide unrivalled teaching. They are alone in offering a three-year postgraduate course which throws a bridge across that chasm between being a student and being an artist.

The RA is a national treasure.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD SORRELL,
Flower Cottage, Chapel Street,
Welford-on-Avon, Warwickshire,
December 8.

From Mrs Humphrey Brooke

Sir, No institution in possession of the Michaelangelo Tondo and the finest exhibition galleries in Europe can be considered to be in anything but temporary financial difficulties.

The Royal Academy was founded by artists for artists with two main statutory aims: the maintenance of the Royal Academy Schools and an annual exhibition of works by living artists.

If the other exhibitions prove too costly to mount for a time, I feel confident that there are many other organisations which, with the approval of the President and Council, would be only too delighted to hire the unparalleled galleries for exhibitions during the winter months at a market rate.

Yours faithfully,
NATHALIE BROOKE,
Flat 3, 11 Onslow Square, SW7,
December 11.

From Mrs Diana King

Sir, As there are about 70,000 Friends of the RA, of whom I am one, surely we can help. If each donated £50 to the cause the immediate condition would be alleviated.

We joined to help the Academy, not just to obtain free tickets. Now is the time to show our allegiance and good will. Let's do it!

Recommitments can come later.

Yours faithfully,
DIANA KING,
31-Mayfield Road, W5,
December 7.

From the Secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts

Sir, In his article on the Royal Academy's financial position Richard Morrison refers to "allegations of... 'borrowing' from the pension fund".

No money has been removed from the pension scheme. As the result of an administrative error payments totalling £200,000 due to the scheme were not made. This will be rectified. The auditors have not "been unable to complete the audit for the year ending September 1996" (report, same day). They simply have not yet finished it.

Your front-page report surmised that it was the intention of the President and myself to "remove control" of the Royal Academy from the Council. In fact we intend to supply Council with much more, and better, information on which to base decisions.

Finally, there is no plan to convert one of the Sackler galleries into a cafe. There is a plan, which Council has approved, for a new Sculpture Court cafe by the lift on the ground floor of the Sackler Wing.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GORDON,
Secretary,
Royal Academy of Arts,
Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1,
December 11.

From Mr Tom McLean

Sir, So, the Royal Academy and the British Museum need more help from accountants.

May we expect progress in these two institutions similar to that made in the NHS in the past 20 years?

Yours faithfully,
TOM MCLEAN,
Ings End,
Rimington, Clitheroe, Lancashire,
December 9.

Cash crisis

From Mr R. D. Cohen

Sir, As if the advent of the year 2000 does not cause information technologists enough stress, where is the new logo for the euro (report, December 12) to be found on the qwerty keyboard?

Yours faithfully,
ROGER COHEN,
41 Hale Lane, Mill Hill, NW7,
December 12.

Everything must go?

From Mr David Mowat

Sir, When I asked two small carollers at my door last evening: "What cause are you collecting for?", the taller one said: "We're saving it up for the January sales."

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MOWAT,
7 Freshfield Road,
Formby, Liverpool,
December 8.

